It's So Much Easier to Give in, So Why is it so Hard to Stop Fighting

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It's So Much Easier to Give in, So Why is it so Hard to Stop Fighting

by IWillBeYourPet

Summary

All WIPs on temp hiatus

Hannibal has revealed to Jack and the FBI that Will Graham is an Omega, and has been using suppressants to pass as a Beta. Will's life is thrown into a spiral, forced to depend on Hannibal for the same freedoms he had gotten used to as he adjusts to life being treated as an Omega.

Except, Will is positive that he is a Beta. The overwhelming proof is telling him he is wrong, Hannibal's calming presence attempting to help him come to terms with it, but deep down he knows that he isn't an Omega.

He feels like he's losing his mind.

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Chapter 1

“Sit down Will, we need to have a talk.”

Will hesitated in the doorway, eyes nervously darting to the people in the room, and he felt like he was being ambushed. Alana’s face was sad, closed off, Jack’s face barely restrained frustration. Aimed at him.

His eyes moved to Hannibal, hoping to get some kind of idea of what was going on. Hannibal’s lips were pursed like he was unhappy about what was going on, but his face gave nothing away as to what it was about.

Will didn’t realize he had shifted his weight back, like he was going to bolt, until Jack snapped out, “ *Sit* .”

The Alpha command made him flinch a little, he usually wasn’t as susceptible to it being a beta, but the last few weeks he’d found his shoulders hunching more, found himself unable to stand against it. So he was already halfway to the desk before he had decided if he was going to listen. There were two empty chairs and he chose the one closest to Hannibal, leaning into the man a bit as he raised his eyes to meet Jack’s.

Unexpectedly it made Jack’s eyes go to Hannibal and the two shared a look that Will didn’t understand before Jack’s eyes landed on him again. There was forced calm in the words, “Thank you. Before we start, is there anything you’d like to tell me?” The calm was struggling to stay in the words and Will had no idea what he could have done that would make the man so angry.

“Jack, I have no idea what this is about.”

“Don’t lie to me!”

At the roar Will flinched, instinctually turning in towards Hannibal, and he shook his head trying to understand his response. He flinched at everything, he accepted that, but rarely did he seek protection from anyone.

Hannibal’s hand came up along the back of his chair, just barely touching his shoulder as the man made a soft soothing sound even as his attention turned to Jack, meeting his eyes and holding them with an edge of his own anger. “Jack, we discussed this.”

Alana’s voice broke into the stare down between the two men. “This isn’t helping.”

Will’s swallowed hard, eyes darting between the two men, and he knew better than to get in between two Alphas standing off like that, but he desperately wanted to know what was going on. He shifted his weight, eyes on Jack’s desk as he muttered, “What did I lie about?” It didn’t break the glare between the two men and Will turned slightly towards Hannibal, voice small, “Please, what is going on?”

Jack finally gave, sitting back in his chair as he waved a hand at him, directing his words to Hannibal, “Go ahead then.”

“Thank you, Jack.”

Hannibal turned in his seat so he was facing Will, tutting at him when his gaze dropped to the floor until he raised it to meet Hannibal’s eyes. He pulled his arm off the back of Will’s chair to lay it on the man’s knee. “You are safe here, Will. You do not have to be afraid of what will happen, and you do not need to pretend anymore.”

Will was sure the only thing on his face was confusion. Most days he thought he was losing his mind but today he was pretty certain everyone else had. He leaned towards Hannibal, making sure his words were clear. “I have no fucking idea what you’re talking about.”

There was a huff from Jack, a sigh from Alana but Hannibal didn’t react at all, the gentle look on his face didn’t waver. The hand on his knee did tighten though, “I think it will be better if you are the one to tell us Will, even if we already know. As a show of good faith.”

His mind raced as he tried to come up with something, anything, that could be causing this kind of reaction. His eyes searched Hannibal’s face, the only secrets he held were that he felt like he was slowly losing his mind, but they were all things Hannibal already knew. Already reported to Jack. So he licked his lips and opened his mouth to speak but nothing came out and he had a moment to see the flash of disappointment on Hannibal’s face before Jack shoved to his feet, pointing a finger at him accusingly.

“Enough! We know you’re an omega, Will. That you’ve been hiding it. This is unacceptable, you’ve put yourself and the other agents in danger.” Jack growled out the words, the indignant rage of an Alpha being lied to, and Will could only stare at him.

Because he was not an omega.

Hannibal let out a sigh at Jack’s outburst and Alana leaned in towards Will, trying to catch his eyes, her voice soft and soothing. “It’s okay Will, we understand why you would do it, that you wouldn’t want to be vulnerable. We do, we understand. There are regulations in place for a reason though and -”

“I’m not an omega.”

Silence fell over the room, heavy with disapproval and frustration and when no one said anything Will turned his attention to Hannibal, lowering his voice, “I would know if I was an omega, I’m not. You know that.”

“Will, I thought I knew that.” Hannibal looked properly ashamed at being deceived and that made Will tilt his head because he didn’t think the man was capable of being ashamed at anything. “The tests do not lie, though. I am disappointed that you didn’t tell me this during our chats. It makes quite a difference.”

“I’m not an omega, the tests are wrong.” Will was starting to feel panic clawing up his throat because he had no idea what was going on. He was born a beta, had lived his whole life as a

beta, he would know if that wasn't true. For a moment doubt slid into his mind, the same way he was starting to doubt so many things that he thought but he forcibly shook his head. He wasn't wrong about this, he knew he wasn't.

Jack looked unsure and looked to Hannibal as if for confirmation before he focused on Will, though his anger had faded a bit at Will's response. "They found Omega pheromones in your blood, Will. And high amounts of suppressants. A dangerous amount."

Alana tried to give Will a smile but it just came off as a pitying grimace. "You probably had to keep increasing them to get it to work, yes? Suppressants aren't meant to be taken all the time Will, it isn't safe. There are side effects."

He gave up trying to reason with Jack or Alana and centered on Hannibal. "I'm not an omega Hannibal, you know that is true."

Hannibal tilted his head in the way that Will associated with the man being interested, entertained, even if his voice was quiet and flat. "One of the side effects is memory loss, Will, if they are taken in the amounts that you seem to be taking. I think combined with your desire to suppress that you are an omega you may have convinced yourself you really are a beta."

Will curled in a little tighter to himself, trying to assess his own body. Bouncing Hannibal's words around his head, like he was tasting them to see if they were real. When he finally spoke up his words came out shaky, not nearly as resolved as he had hoped they would. "I think I'm a beta, Hannibal." His eyes darted between the other two and his voice was a little more desperate as he clung to his gut feelings, "No, I know I'm a beta."

Jack opened his mouth, and Will was sure whatever was going to come out next was going to be a threat. Going to be violent and he couldn't help it as he shrunk back. Though he wished he hadn't done it, feeling vulnerable giving so much away, Jack noticed it immediately and there was a beat before he spoke, voice surprisingly calm. "I think maybe you should take some time to deal with this Will, and then come back when you're willing to be honest."

The words were blunt, Alana only softening them slightly, "Being outed like this I'm sure is very traumatic, Will. That's okay."

Jack nodded, visibly taking a moment to make his body language less threatening, the way he would with a scared omega. And it really sunk in that they believed that scared Omega was him. Which was insane, except that he was cowering, he was averting his eyes and he struggled to remember when he had started doing that. His eyes snapped up to Jack when he kept talking, "You're going to be on a temporary suspension until this is figured out. Omegas are not allowed out in the field, and you've put the bureau in a tough spot." He motioned towards Hannibal, "I've already talked with Dr. Lector and he has agreed to be your Alpha handler while we sort this out."

It was happening so fast that Will felt like he was being attacked, overwhelmed and with the three of them staring at him he finally just put his hands out in a helpless moment and stuttered out, "I'm a b-beta, Jack." It was followed with a mirthless laugh, Will unable to process what was happening, feeling inadequately prepared to defend himself.

Before Jack could respond, Hannibal pushed to his feet standing in between them, directing his words at Jack. "I told you this wasn't the way to do it. You should have let me talk with him in private." He turned towards Will and put his hand out, "Come on, Will. We will go where we can talk through this, yes?"

He didn't think a denial again would help him, and he was eager to get Hannibal one on one, sure he could make the man understand that they were wrong, so he finally nodded and took his hand letting himself be pulled to his feet.

The glimpse he got of Jack looked like the man wasn't happy about their exit but he didn't stop them, Hannibal leading him out with a hand on the small of his back, a small physical touch that should have made him pull away, not lean into it.

The stress was making him twitchier, eyes darting around anxiously, making it hard for him to fight back the frustrated tears pressing at his eyes. The hand on his back moved in small circles, responding to his anxiety with soothing touches.

"It's okay Will, I am here for you. We will figure this out."

The words calmed his heart, let him breathe easier, but only for a moment before he realized what they meant wasn't clear. "Do you believe me that I'm a beta, Hannibal?"

"I believe that you believe you are."

His heart sunk as he processed the words. If Hannibal didn't believe him, nobody would. And if he was the only one that thought it, maybe he was wrong. The tears pressed again and he angrily swiped at them. No. He knew himself. He wasn't crazy, he was not an omega.

He muttered it, mostly to himself, "I'm not an omega."

A glance at Hannibal and the man was only giving him a regretful smile, voice apologetic. "I'm sorry I had to tell him Will, I care about you and you were killing yourself overdosing on the suppressants. You must be able to smell that you are Omega now that they are out of your system, no?"

He had smelled an Omega but he hadn't given it much thought, unconcerned with such things. So he took a moment and it was a dizzying shift in perspective when he realized it was him. Confused and overwhelmed he let Hannibal slip his arm around his shoulders and Will felt his grasp on reality slip just a little bit more.

Chapter 2

Will didn't manage to say anything, to get his thinking straight enough to consider words, until they were nearly to Hannibal's car. Hannibal was opening the door, ushering him towards it when he went rigid, refusing to be pushed in.

Hannibal didn't force him, going as far as to take a step back, waiting for Will to get his wits about him. He appreciated it, and without the presence of Jack and Alana he felt like he could breathe a little easier. Could think. He was still caged in against the car and he licked his lips, his voice coming out smaller than he would have liked, "Where are we going?"

The arm that had been around Will's shoulders slid to the small of his back, tilting his head down to meet Will's gaze, voice gentle. "To my office so we can talk."

His mouth twisted, he wasn't stupid. The body language, the tone, he was being managed. He crossed his arms, making a point to pull away from Hannibal's touch. "My car is here."

"I will bring you back to it, Will."

"I know where your office is, I can meet you there."

Hannibal sighed and a small unhappy sound slipped out of Will's mouth, distressed that he had upset an Alpha, and it brought back the panic. He hadn't intended to make that sound, he shouldn't care that he upset Hannibal, he didn't exist to please Alphas because he wasn't an omega. The feeling didn't go away though, not until he lowered his eyes, tilting his head to bare his neck.

"Oh, Will. No." Hannibal reached up to his cup the side of his face, bringing his chin back down so his throat wasn't bared. "Please, let me bring you to my office so we can talk." When Will still hesitated Hannibal added, "You need to speak with either me or Jack. You can choose."

He was shaken by his reaction, embarrassed as he glanced around the parking lot to see if anyone had seen, and it made him compliant as he let himself be tucked into the car. "Thank you, Will."

He waited until the door closed to mumble, "Didn't have much choice." It made him feel better, even if he waited to make sure the other man wouldn't actually hear him.

What he really wanted was to be alone, to give himself time to think through what was happening, but it didn't look like he was going to get that. Hannibal started the car and pulled out and Will leaned against the door, looking down at his lap. The silence ate away at him though as he fidgeted, unable to sit still when he was in such turmoil. He glanced at Hannibal, "Why did you agree to be my handler?"

"Because I want to help you Will."

“You can help me by believing that I’m not an omega.” There was no answer from Hannibal, not even an acknowledgement that he had said anything, and he crossed his arms, slumping back against the seat.

They arrived at Hannibal’s office, and Will was ushered inside. He shook his head when Hannibal offered him a coffee or water and pointed to the chairs. “Let’s just get this over with.”

Hannibal tilted his head, acquiescing, as they both sat down. “There is no reason to be hostile Will, we are simply here to talk.”

“So you can report it back to Jack.”

Hannibal didn’t respond to the words, didn’t deny that was what they were doing, but he did meet Will’s eyes. “I’d like to ask you something Will, and for this I will not report back to Jack. It will be simply between you and me.”

Will was suspicious, but Hannibal had never lied to him before. Nervously he picked at a non existent piece of fuzz on his pants before he responded, “Can I know what you’re going to ask before I agree to anything.”

“I think it is fair for you to agree to be honest with me.”

Will felt chastised and ducked his head before he swallowed hard and nodded, “I will answer honestly if you promise not to discuss whatever it is with Jack.”

Hannibal nodded and tilted his head as if he was deciding how to word what he was going to say but Will was certain he already knew. “Will, how does being submissive make you feel?”

“Bad.” The word was immediate, no thought given to it, and Will darted up to look at Hannibal before he sighed himself and slumped in his chair, looking anywhere but at the other man. He really thought about it, stomach twisting, and finally he muttered, “I like to know what to expect from others. What is expected from me.”

There was a soft sound of approval from Hannibal, though Will wasn’t sure if it was because of his honesty or the answer itself. It relaxed him that he pleased the other man, and that brought with it an immediate wave of defensive anger. “This is all bullshit, Hannibal.”

Hannibal’s expression hadn’t changed, and he simply watched Will react. When Will settled with his arms across his chest Hannibal spoke, “Does it upset you that you enjoy receiving approval?” Will’s breathing sped up, panic and anger making it hard for him to think and he startled when Hannibal’s hand touched his own. “I am not trying to upset you Will, or embarrass you. Take a few deep breaths for me.”

When Will had calmed Hannibal removed his hand but stayed closer than before. He waited to make sure he had the man’s attention before he spoke, “When I first met you, I was surprised to find that you were a beta. The lack of eye contact, the body language, I am not often deceived, and my first instinct was that you were an omega.” Will tensed as he spoke and Hannibal waited long seconds to see if there would be any comments and when there

wasn't he continued. "It continued to intrigue me. Your mannerisms and instincts all fell in line with an omega."

Will's face was flushed, clearly angry, as he leaned back. "Insulting me isn't helping the situation, Hannibal."

"It was not an insult."

Will took a long steadying breath and met Hannibal's eyes and held them, "Alphas are so blind to the social constructs, you don't even understand that it is."

Despite himself Hannibal was taken aback at the words, couldn't keep the frown off his face, his voice gentle, "Given these thoughts I'm not surprised that you've convinced yourself that you are a Beta Will, it must be very stressful to think that you are so vulnerable."

"I'm not-"

"I thought I had started to smell Omega on you, a little bit at a time, obviously as the suppressants left your system. You even caught me doing it."

Without meaning to Will's hand came up to where an omega scent gland would be under the skin of his neck, though he scowled and dropped his hand. "You were smelling me, I remember." Something seemed to occur to him though and he leaned forward, "If I was taking suppressants to pass as a Beta, why would I have stopped them?"

He thought he had him, saw the light at the end of the tunnel but Hannibal still only gave him that gentle look, "As I said, I think the side effects of the pills and your own desire to repress your nature made you convince yourself you are a beta. Add to that your empathy, that you would pick up on the betas and alphas you are always around, I think you have repressed your true self to the point you no longer remember."

Will swallowed hard, the thought that Hannibal could be right was terrifying. With it came that deep unsettled feeling though, of knowing that something wasn't right and until Hannibal's hand dropped to touch his knee again he hadn't realized the distressed sound filling the room was coming from him. Normally being touched would set him off but the steady press of Hannibal's fingers on his leg, the alpha scent around him, and he found himself calming without wanting to.

He looked down at Hannibal's hand then up to the man's face, helpless and unable to come up with anything to defend himself. Hannibal's eyes searched him, and then he patted Will's knee and pulled his hand away. "I think today has been a very long day, and that any more discussion can wait until tomorrow."

Will nodded his agreement, anything to be able to leave, even though he knew it wouldn't be that simple. It was Hannibal that finally sighed, "I would like you to come to my house tonight Will, you are in an emotional state currently that I feel it would be unethical to leave you alone." Before Will could protest Hannibal added, "My apologies Will, but I am going to have to insist." He realized it had been deliberate that Hannibal had him leave his car and he felt trapped.

A tear slid down Will's cheek, and he swiped at it as he nodded. Hannibal had been made his alpha handler and it didn't matter if he didn't think he was an omega, currently he was considered one and it was within the man's rights to *insist* . Angrily he shoved to his feet, and tried to snarl out the words, but they came out as more of a whimper, "Tell me again that I shouldn't worry about what will happen if I was omega." He looked away, fumbling at his pockets until his hand closed around his phone, "I need to make sure someone checks on my dogs."

Hannibal moved smoothly to his feet, hand covering Will's on his phone, making the man jerk away as his eyes came up to him. "I will take you to check on your dogs before we retire to my house. You can get anything that you will need. That will make you more comfortable."

It eased his defensiveness, calmed at the thought of seeing his dogs, at being able to have his own things from home. Made gratitude work its way into his chest because he was well aware that Hannibal didn't have to do that. So he tilted his head down, slight deference to the other man, "Thank you."

"Of course, Will." Will moved towards the door but stopped when Hannibal hesitated. "There is just one thing before we go Will. Depending on how the next few days go, what we find out, even as an Omega Jack would still like you to be able to go out in the field." Hannibal sounded like he thought that was a terrible idea but Will found himself stumbling forward, hopeful. Focusing on that even as an omega he'd be able to do his job, for a moment losing the thought that he was pretty fucking sure he wasn't one.

"I can?"

Hannibal's mouth quirking said he didn't miss that Will didn't demand that he was a beta, that without realizing it he was starting to accept what they were telling him, and he nodded. "A condition of this is that you take heat suppressants though. They are not what you were taking before,"

Mentioning heats seemed to knock Will out of the compliant lull and he spat out "I wasn't taking any suppressants-"

But Hannibal ignored him as he continued what he was saying over him, "they will not harm you or affect your omega scent and instincts, but they will prevent you from going into heat."

"I'm not taking any medications."

Hannibal hmm'd at that and reached into his desk to pull out a bottle with no label on it and Will eyed it suspiciously. He took a step back and spoke slower, trying to be more reasonable, "Write me a prescription, I'll go get them myself."

"If you are going to maintain that you are a beta, Will, we will need to run more tests. We need to be completely certain what is in your system so it would make more sense to receive anything directly from me." Will was eyeing him and Hannibal only opened the bottle and tilted a pill into his hand. "Have you ever gone through a heat before, Will?"

“No.” He waited for Hannibal to look at him and pointedly added, “Because I’m a beta. We don’t have heats.”

Hannibal gave him an indulgent smile, not bothering to argue with him, and the words were starting to get grating even to Will. “They have the potential to be very unpleasant if you are not mated. So I’m sure you agree it would be in your best interest to take precautions against going into one.”

“Hannibal - I don’t need to take that. I don’t want to take it.”

“It is a condition of you working with the bureau, the consequences of an omega going into heat during a case would be catastrophic. It is something Jack is requiring.” Will hesitated and Hannibal pushed forward. “Think of it this way Will. If you are right, and you are a beta, taking this has no effects on anything. However, if you are wrong, you run the risk of going into heat. Which choice seems safer?”

“Just give me the damn pill.”

Will barely glanced at Hannibal as he handed it to him, just snatching a glass of water and downing the pill without even looking at it. The trust Will had in him was astounding and he found himself softening towards him.

“Thank you Will. Why don’t we get going, if we’d like to have dinner at a decent hour we will need to get on our way to collect your things.” Will nodded and followed Hannibal though he stopped them again, just outside the door and when he met Will’s eyes his face didn’t give away much but it was not unkind. “I beseech you to be honest with yourself, Will. Only a week or two ago when you were on suppressants you would not have been this compliant. I know this is difficult, but please trust me.”

With few other choices Will nodded, and found he wasn’t lying when he muttered out, “I do.”

Hannibal looked pleased and Will grudgingly admitted, if only to himself, that it felt good to bring out that response. With a sigh he hunched his shoulders and followed Hannibal to the car.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal didn't need directions to where he lived, didn't need to put anything into a gps, and if Will wasn't so stressed out by the current situation he might have been suspicious of it. As it was he was pleased that he didn't have to give much information, that Hannibal didn't ask him any more questions, and he used the time to try to decide what he would need from his house. "How long am I going to stay with you?"

"That depends on you, Will." He glanced at him, a small smile at the frustration on the man's face, "Hopefully just a few days while this is sorted out."

A few days were too many to leave his dogs. He didn't think that Hannibal would let him take them with him, though he enjoyed the thought of Hannibal's upscale pricey things covered in dog fur. Outloud, mostly to himself, he murmured, "I'll ask Alana to take care of the dogs."

"I think that is an excellent idea, Will. She is anxious to help you."

The sound he made was not grateful, and he carefully didn't look at Hannibal. "Yes, you all seemed incredibly *eager* to help me." He turned his head towards himself, scenting, mind reeling when he still smelled omega. It was like smelling a stranger and he crossed his arms, pushing down the panic.

It helped when he could see home in the distance, craving the touch of his dogs and his pack, and he looked down at his lap, "Can't I please stay here?" His jaw clenched, gritting his teeth, as he tried to be persuasive, but it wasn't exactly his best trait. "I'll stay here, won't go anywhere. I promise."

"No." Will waited for more. For an explanation, for Hannibal to talk him into why he couldn't, to be managed but there was nothing more. He wasn't sure if he liked the blunt unapologetic answer more or less than the gentle one.

He trailed his fingers down the window and swallowed hard before he spoke towards his lap, "I'm not an omega, but if somehow this turns out that way, will I not ever be able to come back home?" Unmated Omegas were rarely allowed to live on their own, especially not out in the middle of anywhere.

"It is not ideal."

"Not ideal for who?"

Hannibal's hands tightened slightly on the wheel, and Will knew he must be overwhelmed because he struggled to tell if Hannibal was frustrated or feeling guilty, though the other man was always hard to read.

“Perhaps this conversation is better to have once we’ve arrived home and eaten dinner, yes? Not sitting in your drive?”

Though he wanted to say No Will only settled into his seat to wait, certain that he wouldn’t sway the other man anyway. It made more sense to try to collect his thoughts.

They pulled into the drive and Hannibal put it in park and Will glanced towards him. “I don’t suppose I can convince you to wait in the car?”

His only answer was a shake of the head as Hannibal got out of his car and with a soft sigh he followed suit, not above slamming the door, giving in to the urge to have a tantrum. It didn’t look like Hannibal even reacted, heading towards his house like he owned it, and Will scurried past him to get there first.

His hackles were up and it made him fumble getting his keys, Hannibal’s eyes on him, and a blush rose up his face. He was on his territory, it should make him feel calm, but Hannibal being there threw it all off.

The door opened and there was barking and chaos and Will settled in to it. He stepped aside to let Hannibal in but then ignored him, crouching down to pet his dogs, letting them swarm him and hide him away, burying his face in Winston’s fur.

How long he stayed there he wasn’t sure, but once he had huddled with his pack he found it nearly impossible to move away, but eventually there was a hand on his arm pulling him to his feet. His eyes jumped to Hannibal and the man looked apologetic, “I know you are overwhelmed, Will, but please gather your things. It is getting late.”

He nodded, letting the dogs out so they could do their business, setting about putting food and fresh water down for them. He could sense Hannibal looking over his house, assessing it, and it made the flush rise up his face again. He knew it was a simple place, the way he liked it, aggravated that he felt like he had to defend it. Aggravated that Hannibal and his alpha scent were permeating his territory.

While he was thinking about it he pulled out his phone, calling Alana. He ducked as far away from Hannibal as he could as she answered. He wanted to ask her why she had done this, why she hadn’t warned him, but the words stuck in his throat and all he ended up doing was asking her to look after his dogs.

She agreed like she had already expected that, and he wondered how long they had been planning this. She tried to say more to him but he mumbled a goodbye and hung up the phone. It made him feel sick, betrayed, and he took a moment to try to calm that down before he was faced with again with Hannibal. He peeked around the corner and Hannibal was where he had left him, just inside the door, not venturing any further into his house. Giving him his space.

It could be worse. He pulled out a duffle bag, shoving clothes haphazardly into it, and there wasn’t much else he could think of to take. He shoved the book he was currently reading in there, his charger, the travel toiletries he kept ready for cases and then with just a small

glance at Hannibal he pulled the blanket off his bed. It smelled like his dogs and it calmed him, and he folded it as best he could and slid it under his arm as he shouldered the bag.

“I have blankets at my house, Will.” When he got closer Hannibal’s nose wrinkled, a brief loss of control, “Ones that do not smell like dogs.”

Will’s fingers tightened on the blanket and he swallowed hard, “I like it.”

Hannibal tilted his head, and with a nearly inaudible sigh he nodded. “Of course, if it will help you settle in, I’m sure it is difficult being away from your pack.”

Will nodded, lip curled as he met Hannibal’s eyes for a split second before he looked away. “It is. Especially when my human pack is hell bent on betraying me.”

“Do you have everything you need?”

“Yea.” He let the dogs in, only a whistle to bring them running. He said goodbye to each one, keeping it short, aware that Hannibal’s patience wasn’t endless. Finally there was nothing left to do and he motioned at the door.

He had been to Hannibal’s house before, not enough times to be comfortable there, of course he wasn’t really comfortable anywhere. Hannibal didn’t try to talk to him in the car, let him lean against the door and collect his thoughts and he was grateful for it. Jack would have pushed and prodded until Will broke, until he shut down, would have rolled Will into compliance through brute force and they wouldn't have gotten anywhere.

At his house though, once they were walking through the front door, Will found himself backpedalling to the door, wincing. The scent of Alpha, of it being an Alpha’s territory froze him in place. The difference was too much for him to deny at the moment, he had never been struck by the other’s scent like this before.

Hannibal made a soothing sound, hand gripping the back of Will’s neck firmly, “It’s okay, I know it is probably a little much for you, but you are welcome here Will. Try to relax.”

He was being prodded further into the house, but with the Alpha in question touching him it didn’t seem so threatening. He found himself curling in towards Hannibal, a distressed whine slipping from his lips when the hand on his neck fell away. It was back immediately, fingers stroking gently.

“Hannibal.” His voice broke, nervously darting his eyes around, and he wasn’t sure what he was asking for but knew the other man would be able to help.

“I had the guest room cleaned this morning. There will still be an Alpha scent there but minimal, especially once your things are in there. It should help you calm.” He tilted his head towards Will, “I’ll show you to your room and you can get settled while I start dinner, take a little while to get your thoughts together.”

“Thank you.” He clutched his bag to him tighter and blanket, trying to hide in the scent of him and his dogs, but it was quickly being overpowered.

The hand stayed on his neck until they reached a door and Hannibal took a step back. “There is an attached bathroom, make yourself comfortable. I will stay out here to minimize my scent inside. I will come and collect you once dinner is ready.”

“Thank you Hannibal.” The man only gave him a small nod and once he turned Will slipped inside the room, shutting the door behind him.

He was right, the scent was almost neutral in the room, and he dropped his bag on the floor. The blanket went on the bed and the urge to curl up under it was overwhelming enough that he slid into the bed, pulling it around him. The day hit him all at once, it was too long to be in fight or flight, and buried under the scent of home and pack he was asleep before he even realized his eyes were closing.

Chapter End Notes

We start getting some answers next chapter :D

Chapter 4

Hannibal knocked on the door and waited, tilting his head when there was no answer. No responding sound from the other side of the door. “Will?”

He knocked a second time but when there was still no response he grabbed the handle, pushing the door open. It took him a moment to find Will, only a small tuft of curly hair sticking out above the blanket and he could just make out the gentle rise and fall of him breathing.

For a moment he debated if he should let him sleep, the man could use it, but even more he could use some decent food. So he moved into the room, taking care to touch as little as possible, until he reached the edge of the bed.

Will’s face was lax, calm in a way it never was when he was awake. Hannibal crouched to pick up his glasses where they had fallen off his face and onto the floor and then gently touched the man’s arm. “Will?”

Will came awake all at once, immediately kicking into defensive action, shoving himself back away from the threat even as he scrambled for a weapon that wasn’t there. The force was almost enough to send him off the other side of the bed as his mind tried to understand how someone had gotten so close to him without any of his dogs reacting.

Both of Hannibal’s hands were up, palms out in a placating manner, and he held completely still as Will’s panicked eyes finally landed on him.

“Hannibal?”

“I was waking you for dinner. I didn’t mean to startle you.” When he was sure he wouldn’t bolt he held out the hand with Will’s glasses. He expected Will to snatch them away but the man was still bleary, still half asleep and instead he tilted his chin up and waited. Hannibal carefully settled the glasses on his face, fingers trailing down the back of his neck briefly before he moved away.

“Shall we?”

Will nodded but it still took him a moment to slide out of the bed, rubbing at his eyes under his glasses. He couldn't believe that he had fallen asleep, was embarrassed, and followed Hannibal with his eyes on the ground.

They were nearly to the dining room when he was finally awake enough to realize he was being rude. He cleared his throat, “So, uh, what is for dinner?”

Hannibal gave him a pleased look for asking, and responded with something that might have been french and meant nothing to Will, but he nodded anyway. He wasn’t particularly picky about what he ate. If anything he’d prefer a grilled cheese.

He settled into a seat when Hannibal pointed at it, reaching for the glass of wine sitting there, only to pull his hand back without being sure why. Of course Hannibal saw it and spoke without looking at him, "You may have some wine Will, and do not need permission to eat what is put in front of you."

As soon as the man said it he understood the feeling, that in an Alpha territory he couldn't help deferring, and because it sounded like the man was proving a point he muttered against the table. "Betas can struggle with that too."

"They can. In the past though, you definitely have not." There was definitely humor in his voice at that.

Disgruntled he reached for the wine again, downing a third of it in one long gulp. He hoped it was something expensive that was supposed to be savored. He would have downed the whole glass just to be difficult if he wasn't worried how it would affect him on an empty stomach.

Silently he watched Hannibal move around the room, setting down food, and despite his anger his mouth watered. He couldn't remember the last time he had a home cooked meal. Once the food was down and Hannibal slipped into his chair Will motioned at the food, a heartfelt 'Thank you' slipping out his mouth.

"Of course Will, it is my pleasure."

Will was sure there were niceties that he should be engaging in but he'd never been great at those things anyways, and he was sure Hannibal knew that, so he simply tucked into the food. It was delicious and he found himself eating slower, savoring it. Maybe staying with Hannibal for a few days wouldn't be so bad.

"Do you always cook this…" He stumbled over a word that wouldn't sound like he was criticizing and finally settled on, "extravagant?"

"It can vary, but generally, yes. Especially when I have others to cook for."

"It's delicious. Maybe you should have been a chef."

Hannibal grinned and tilted his glass in a small acknowledgment, "I'd call it more of a hobby than anything else."

Will laughed, eyeing the table, "Quite the hobby." He was grateful that Hannibal wasn't pushing the topic, happy to get to have a real meal.

By the time they had finished eating he felt more relaxed, finishing off his second glass of wine. Or maybe it was the third. He wasn't sure, Hannibal had been quick to fill it any time it was empty. For several minutes he watched the man cleaning up before he realized and scrambled to his feet, "How can I help?"

"No worries, Will, you are my guest. Please sit and relax, I will get you another glass of wine."

He was uncomfortable being waited on and shook his head taking another step towards Hannibal. Without turning Hannibal's voice lowered, gently scolding, "Will."

There was a small commotion and Hannibal turned to glance behind him, letting out a sigh at Will on his knees. His eyes were wide, face startled, and he made like he was going to scramble to his feet but he stayed where he was, body tense as his eyes came up to Hannibal.

"I can see you're angry Will, but it is misplaced." He set down the dishes in his hands and moved in front of the man, watching him cringe away. Slowly he reached down to grab his upper arms and pulled him to his feet.

As soon as he could Will scrambled backwards, "What the fuck."

"Language, Will."

Will's mouth worked like he wasn't sure what to say to that, to any of it, and when Hannibal motioned at the chair he sunk into it, but kept his eyes on the other man. Will scrubbed his face and spoke again, trying to control his panic, "Why did that happen?"

"I didn't realize you'd be so responsive to an Alpha tone Will, may I?" He held out his hand and even though Will wasn't sure what he was going to do he nodded. Hannibal ran one hand up his cheek, over his forehead like he was checking for a fever.

"I don't know what that means."

"As a omega…" A grimace on Will's face made him pause and reword what he was going to say in the interest of keeping the man calm, "An omega has a reaction to an Alpha tone, especially an unhappy one. In this case it compelled you to submit. I have used it with you before, it didn't have any effect. I didn't think to not use it."

Hannibal dropped his hands, going back to cleaning up, letting Will collect himself. He had nearly cleared all the plates away before Will spoke, voice quiet as he stared at the ground. "Hannibal, if I was an omega, and I'm not saying I am… I don't understand any of this. I've never had to, I've never responded this way." He was wavering though, the wine lowering his defenses, "Or I don't remember if I did."

Hannibal leaned against the counter, wiping his hands off on a towel, and let his gaze scan over Will. His head was down, body curled in tight, dark curls falling over his face and he couldn't help scenting the air, letting out a small pleased sound as his kitchen was filled with omega scent. Everything about the smaller man was perfect.

"It's okay Will, you don't have to be afraid. I will be here for whatever you need, you can trust me."

"I do." His eyes darted up, and there was anxiousness there before he tilted his head back down.

"What is wrong, Will?"

His face flushed, twining his fingers together, even as his breathing sped up. Starting to have a panic attack.

He moved closer, crouching in front of Will and placed a hand on each knee. "Will, please calm down." When he didn't pull away from the touch Hannibal moved one of his hands to cup the side of his face, turning his chin up, "I can't help you if you don't talk to me."

Will nodded frantically, his eyes were shut but they opened to meet Hannibal's, "If I'm like this… I don't know *why* I'm like this right now, but if I am… I can't be around Jack. I can't… I already have trouble…" His voice trailed off, pitchy and wobbling.

"I understand." He didn't make him keep explaining it, he knew what Will was saying. As a beta Will had buckled when faced with Jack, had been rolled by that blunt force Alpha personality, as an omega he'd have no hope. He stroked one thumb along Will's jaw, "I will stay between you and Jack. I have been appointed your handler and if Jack oversteps it is within my rights to do something about it. I promise you."

The tension in Will eased and as it did Hannibal dropped his hands, hiding his smile as Will leaned into him subconsciously when he moved away. "Let me get you another glass of wine, try to relax."

Numbly Will nodded and Hannibal took his glass, bringing it to the other side of the kitchen to refill it. He glanced once at Will, head in his hands, gripping his hair and he reached in the drawer to his right and pulled out one of the bottles in there.

He was sure if he offered something to Will to help him relax, to help him sleep, he would decline. He emptied the powder into Will's wine, swirling it to blend it in, and headed back to the table with a gentle smile. He knew what was best for the man.

It hadn't been long after Will downed the wine that his eyes were falling shut, swaying in his chair, and Hannibal had gently helped him to his feet.

"A little too much wine, maybe. Let's get you to bed." Will had curled into him as he walked, rubbing his face against Hannibal's shoulder, soft and compliant. It was lovely.

He brought him to the guest room, helped Will to sit on the edge of the bed. Will tried to kick off his shoes and Haninbal let him, reaching up to shush him when he struggled with his shirt and helped him with that too. He longed to encourage Will to pull off the rest of his clothes, but there would be plenty of time for that in the future. Without the man being drugged.

So he only nudged him until he was on the bed and pulled the covers up, though he allowed himself to just barely stroke the man's face, thumb sliding across his bottom lip. "Sleep well, Will."

He left the room and shut the door quietly behind him, heading towards the kitchen to finish cleaning up. And to give it time to make sure Will was fully asleep.

He hummed to himself as he cleaned up the kitchen and thought about the other man. When he had first heard what his colleague had found, he had been intrigued. Curious.

The doctor had been excited to tell him, to show him, and while he usually would have responded to such a desperate attempt for attention with derision, he had been willing to indulge when it involved Will Graham.

The scans showed an unexpected finding. The doctor had explained that even though Will was a beta he had an omega scent gland, potentially had the omega parts that would allow him to go into heat. They were just… dormant for lack of a better word.

Hannibal had asked if that meant Will was an omega, and the disappointing answer had been no. That his body didn't produce the omega hormones, the lack of which left him as a beta. It sometimes happened, he was told, though they didn't know why. Betas that had the parts that made them omega, possibly if there had been a twin in the womb that was going to be an omega but had been reabsorbed, possibly as a fluke, but without omega pheromones that is all they were. Extra parts.

Not enough studies about it to give any concrete answers, though from what he had read it seemed that betas with this issue tended to be more submissive, softer betas, but that was all.

Unless.

With a curiosity that overrode the other man's ethics, the doctor had said it might be possible to jump start the omega in the man, that if he was given omega hormones he may react as an omega, his body was primed to handle it. With hormones flooding his system Will may be unable to resist falling into the deeply buried omega instincts. That given them long enough his body may kick into action and make him a true omega, able to bond and go into heats, but it was all hypothetical. There wasn't much research on it, the doctor had scoffed, because who would *want* to be an omega.

It would take good hormones though, not the chemicals that could be found in pharmacies, it would have to be something nearly as good as actual omega pheromones and that just wasn't something available.

He had thanked the doctor for indulging his *professional* curiosity, and then had snapped his neck, erasing any trace that he had ever seen Will.

He did enjoy something new and exciting to try, to see what would happen, and truth be told the idea of Will as a true omega, bending to him in that way, was a thrill all on its own.

So he had put together his plan, to start dosing the man with pheromones and see how it went. He had been surprised when it began to work. At first he wasn't sure if he only smelled the pheromones he had dosed him with, but he was certain it was Will himself. The scent stronger along his neck, his scent gland producing it, and when his behavior started to fall into line as well he knew. After that he had slipped in suppressants, enough to back up the story that he was going to push, and had continued to dose the man. It had been tricky but of course it was easier now, all he had to do was tell Will the pills were suppressants and

he took them like a good omega without questioning. A few times he had eased back on the doses, disappointed when the omega scent had faded, but he hadn't lost faith that it may eventually take, and in the meantime as long as he kept dosing him, the man slipped further into his instincts.

The key had been good pheromones.

With the kitchen clean Hannibal went back to Will's room and pressed open the door, watching him sleep for a few minutes before he shut it and headed towards the other side of the house. Towards the basement.

All the way past the coolers, past the floor with the drain, until he reached a cell at the back. A man was strapped to the table, iv in his arm, another needle in his neck by his scent gland. His head lulled towards Hannibal when he moved into the room, but there was no particular focus or awareness. It wouldn't do to have a scared omega, he wasn't looking for fear flooded pheromones to make his pills.

He patted the man's hair absently, using his alpha sense to calm the heavily drugged man, and checked the small vial attached to the tube from the man's neck. It was half full, sluggishly dripping from his scent gland. Grade A, high quality omega phermones, straight from the source.

Because nothing was too good for his Will.

Chapter 5

Will woke up with his head pounding, feeling a bit fuzzy as he couldn't remember making it from the dining room up to the bedroom. He sat up and rubbed at his eyes, glancing down at himself. He was shirtless but his pants were still on, and he couldn't help be embarrassed that he had drank enough to black out.

On the table next to him there was a glass of water, 2 aspirin, and a pill he remembered as one of the suppressants. Rolling his eyes he grabbed all three pills and downed them dry, only taking a sip of water after they were down. Like he was making a point even if he was the only one in the room. He waited a moment to see how his stomach was going to handle it and when he was sure he wouldn't be sick he drank down more of the water.

The door to his room was open and he could smell food cooking somewhere in the house and his stomach grumbled. He wanted to head down there, suddenly starving, but his eyes caught where the towel had also been set on the table next to him. A subtle message he supposed. He sniffed himself and he smelled like his dogs, which was calming and he would regret losing, but he knew Hannibal was offended by it.

Speaking of the man he could scent him in the room, he had clearly put Will to bed, and he rubbed at his face again. Quite the impression he always managed to make on the other man. Shaking his head he fixed up the bed and grabbed the towel, picking up his bag as he headed into the connected bathroom.

He cleaned up quickly, pulling on his clothes and toweling off his hair as he looked at himself in the mirror. He closed his eyes for a moment, scenting, trying to put together what he knew about himself with the omega scent that clung to him. Too strong to be from something else. He tried to remember, tried to really think about it, but he couldn't come up with a single memory of being an omega.

A distressed whine made it out of his throat, confused and feeling like the ground had shifted out from under him. He tried to take a few calming breaths, trying to calm his panic, and jumped when there was a voice from the hallway.

"Will?"

It startled him and he gripped the counter, trying to ground himself, calling out, "Yeah - I… I'll be right out." He was shaking, and swallowed hard.

"Will, are you okay? I could smell your distress from downstairs."

He brought his eyes to the door, and stared at it, wondering if Hannibal would come closer but there was just silence on the other side. Finally he managed to get out, "I'm okay."

"Very well. Once you are dressed please come downstairs, breakfast is ready."

He nodded, giving little care to the thought that Hannibal couldn't see him, and continued to stare at himself in the mirror. Finally he sighed and put on his glasses. He had to go out and face Hannibal sometime.

He made his way downstairs, following what he knew about the man's house but more his nose and finally came upon the dining room. Hannibal was just setting down food, and he looked so relaxed in just a pair of slacks and a white button down shirt. Will glanced down at his own clothes, a faded tshirt and a pair of jeans and felt underdressed. He refused to acknowledge it.

"You didn't have to make breakfast. It smells amazing."

"How are you feeling this morning?" There was a small smile in his voice, "I thought you may be a little hungover."

"A little bit." He shifted, trying to read Hannibal's body language, "I'm sorry I drank so much, must have been nerves. I hope I didn't say anything stupid."

"It had been a long day, don't concern yourself."

He nodded, settling into a seat when Hannibal motioned at it. It was all so normal for a minute he had forgotten about the circumstances for him being there. At least until there was food set in front of him, Hannibal sliding into a chair and picking up his own fork, and he found himself staring at the food, unable to eat. Hannibal had taken a few bites by the time he noticed and he set his fork down. "Still not able to eat without permission?"

Or maybe he had noticed. He shook his head, refusing to look up from the table.

Hannibal nodded, "I wondered if giving you permission last night would be enough, but apparently not. Please Will, help yourself."

Out of spite he wanted to not eat anything, but he knew it wasn't Hannibal's fault. All things considered the other man was going more than out of his way to help him. Make him comfortable. "Thanks."

"I know this is an uncomfortable situation Will. I commend the way you are handling it."

He couldn't help scoffing at that, "If you guys are right I'm the one that caused it." His eyes found Hannibal's and he wanted to say they were wrong but he couldn't get his mouth around the words, too much anxiety that maybe they weren't. He looked away and ate a few forkfuls of food before he spoke, "So what exactly am I doing here?"

"Eating breakfast."

He let out a huff of a laugh. "Thanks, I'm not that far gone."

"We're going to talk, discuss the situation, and go from there."

"You could just accept that I'm a beta and let me go home, and we could all just call it a day."

“You know we can’t do that Will, not if you are an omega.”

He poked at his food thoughtfully, “Are you telling me that I *can’t* leave?”

“Of course not, Will. You are not a prisoner. However, you know that there are regulations for Omegas. Jack is hoping to get you special privileges, and if you refuse to work with us there is nothing else he can do.”

His stomach turned at the words and he pushed his food away, appetite gone. “I’ve been living on my own my whole life Hannibal, it makes no sense that something like this would make any sort of difference.”

“Pardon my bluntness Will, but if I recall you have been living on your own in a way that has left you unstable and struggling, or I never would have been brought into your life. Maybe this is the underlying reason why.”

“Omegas are submissive, Hannibal, and-”

“As are you.”

The words had more force behind them, using an alpha tone, and Will’s stomach twisted more. Hannibal was still eating, didn’t look like he was intentionally trying to hurt him, but still his face flushed as he made an indignant sound. “I’m not submissive-”

“As I said, when I first met you I had assumed you were an omega.”

“Because I listen so well?”

Hannibal shrugged one shoulder, but looked up to meet his eyes. “Docile and submissive are not the same things.” His eyes sparkled, just a little, “We wouldn’t have nearly as interesting conversations if you were docile.”

The humor in his tone put him on edge, “I’m glad it’s funny to you. Pardon me if I don’t find my life being ruined a source of humor.”

Hannibal sighed and set down his fork, turning his full attention to him. “I assure you Will, I do not find the situation humorous.”

His tone was gentle and Will wanted to be indignant, wanted that to enrage him, but instead it had the opposite effect as he could feel his panic calming. He tried to snap at the man but it came out weakly, “Don’t do that.”

“Do what?”

“Don’t… don’t play that game. You know what you’re doing. You’re using whatever alphas do to calm omegas, stop it.”

“But it worked to calm you?” His tone was gentle but the intent in them was clear.

“Yeah, but I don’t want…” Will’s words trailed off as he realized what he was saying. His mouth snapped shut and he looked down at his plate.

The rest of breakfast was in silence.

After they ate Will sat quietly and watched Hannibal clean up. The urge, again, to offer to help was there but he remembered the response the night before. He wanted to hear that alpha voice as little as possible.

Once Hannibal seemed satisfied with what had been cleaned up he motioned further into the house. “I thought we could sit outside and have a cup of tea while we talk.”

“I’d rather have a whiskey.”

“A little early for that, don’t you think?”

“Not from where I’m standing.” He ducked his head as he said it though, following behind Hannibal as they headed towards the back of the house, spilling out a door onto a small deck.

“Have a seat and I will be back shortly.” Hannibal was close to him, a hand on his shoulder directing him in the chair. This close his alpha scent was strong and the proximity made Will flush, wanting to press into the touch. He forced himself to pull away and move towards a chair.

He settled into it and watched the man disappear into the house, and tried to use the time to get his thoughts together. His head was still foggy, must still be hungover, though he couldn’t remember drinking ever leaving him feeling quite like this. He dropped a fist on one hand, closing his eyes, thankful that if he had to go through this at least it was Hannibal and not Jack that had been appointed his handler.

Hannibal brought the water to a boil, pulling out two glasses.

He was disappointed with Will’s response, or lack thereof, of his alpha pheromones. He could smell traces of arousal on him, could feel him lean into the touch, so he was being affected but not nearly as much as he had hoped. More than only the day before though, so perhaps it would just take some time.

In the meantime, he wanted to push the reaction, mostly to see what Will would do. He slipped a liquid into Will’s cup of tea, something that would cause a physical reaction from the man. It was important to him that Will responded to him, but not Jack. Not another alpha. And he would deem to lower himself to manufactured ways until he could get the omega response to be fully realized in the other man.

Will looked like he was nearly asleep when Hannibal returned with the tea, shutting the door a touch harder than usual to announce his presence and rouse the man. Will sat up straight, a sheepish half smile on his face, thanking Hannibal when he set the cup down in front of him.

Will eyed it skeptically and back at Hannibal. "I'm not really a tea kind of guy."

"Indulge me."

There was a sigh but he didn't fight him, lifting it up to drink, making a small hmm sound when it wasn't as bad as he thought it was going to be. It crossed Hannibal's mind that for someone he'd seen drink day old burned coffee cold, he had no place being picky.

He waited until Will had drank the entire glass before he pushed to his feet, moving around the table. He pressed out the alpha pheromones, could see the flush renew itself on Will's face, could see him shift uncomfortably in his seat. Perfect.

"Will, maybe I show you something?"

"Sure."

Hannibal nodded, "Stand up."

Will was slower to do that, aware that the flush he had felt earlier was getting stronger, aware that other parts of him were suddenly interested, and standing up would only make it more obvious. He did as he was told though, letting his hands hang in front of him.

"May I touch you?"

His first instinct was to say no, out of habit more than anything else, but he nodded. Hannibal moved closer, alpha scent filling his nose, and he fought his eyes wanting to fall close. Scolded his body for acting like that.

Hannibal lifted a hand to the side of his face, cupping it as he met his eyes. "Do you know what an omega scent gland is?"

"Of course I do."

Hannibal's hand trailed down the side of his jaw to his throat, fingers sliding around to cup the back of his neck as his thumb settled at a spot just under his jaw. Will couldn't help it as he shivered, shifting his hips back, putting distance between the man and his half hard dick, hoping Hannibal wouldn't notice.

His thumb circled the spot softly and then pressed a bit harder at the small gland he could feel there. He already knew that it was there based on Will's tests, and he was certain the other man must have noticed it at some point during his life but denial could be a powerful thing. Will's breath hitched as he pressed against it, pulling him closer by the hand around the back of his neck, thumb dragging slowly over it.

Against his thigh he could feel Will harden, between the drugs and the omega response it had to be a sensitive spot. "Do I have to say it?"

Will's voice was shaky, "It could be… could be something else."

He nodded, clearly humoring him, and dropped his hand but didn't pull away. Instead he pressed fingers under Will's chin to get him to look up. It made Will's shift, rubbing against Hannibal's thigh for a moment before he tore his eyes away and stepped backward, letting out a shaky breath.

"It doesn't prove anything." He tried to put force into the words but even to his own ears it sounded like he didn't believe it. He ignored that and tried to subtly shift his pants, not missing as Hannibal's eyes darted down and wasn't this just humiliating.

"I uh…" He pulled his glasses off to rub at his face, mostly just for something to do.

"It is a normal reaction for an omega to an alpha Will, especially if it is something that they haven't experienced recently. Or are newly off suppressants. You shouldn't be embarrassed."

"I'm not embarrassed." His voice squeaked and he forced it to calm, "I don't even know what you're talking about."

"That you have an erection."

Will choked on nothing, not expecting Hannibal to be so blunt. He shifted awkwardly, looking anywhere but at the other man, not sure how to respond.

"Why don't you sit back down and we can talk about the plan for today."

He nodded and sat again, shifting, uncomfortable as he willed his cock to soften, and it felt almost surreal that they were just going to ignore it and go back to their chat.

"May I ask you a personal question, Will?"

He snorted, "Sure, why not."

"I know you will find this an uncomfortable thing for me to ask, but you clearly are having a physical reaction, are you…" Hannibal tilted his head, like he was weighing his words, "You aren't going to like this question but are you producing slick?"

"No." The earth could honestly just open up and swallow him down anytime now. Hannibal watched him, clearly waiting, and Will closed his eyes. Unable to help it he pressed his thighs together, not even sure what it would feel like if he did produce slick. His brain practically stuttering as it tried to process that he only would if he was an omega, so why was he even thinking about it? He spoke lower, voice barely a whisper. "No."

Hannibal nodded. There was a tense moment of silence and when he spoke again his voice was light, trying to break the tension. "It could be worse Will, you could be having this discussion with Jack."

It was so close to his own thought earlier that Will couldn't help a small lilt of his mouth, glancing up to meet Hannibal's eyes before he dropped them to the table. It was hard to sit there and ignore that he was hard, pressed up uncomfortably against his pants. He cleared his

throat and tried to pretend it wasn't happening, "So what happens when you insist I'm an omega and I insist I'm a beta?"

Hannibal watched him fidget, "Will, perhaps you'd like to retire to your room where you can get more… comfortable? We could meet a bit later."

His face got impossibly redder, surprised there was enough blood for that and to keep him hard, the last thing he could imagine was them taking a break for him to go jerk off with Hannibal knowing that is what he was going to do. "I'm fine."

"Okay." Hannibal settled into his seat, leaning back, "Can you give me one piece of solid proof that you are a beta, Will?"

"Of course." Will leaned forward, glad at least that he had on jeans and not pajama pants. It may be uncomfortable but at least it kept him somewhat… contained. Let him concentrate on the question as he tried to summon one of what he was sure were several points of proof.

And quickly he realized he couldn't come up with any. He chewed on his bottom lip, mind distracted enough that he reached down to adjust himself without thinking about it, trying to ease the pressure of his jeans, only paying attention when the touch of his own hand on himself made a small sound slip out of his throat. He jerked his hand away, crossing his arms over his stomach and snapped out, "I don't go into heats."

"You were on suppressants. Do you have any proof that couldn't have been tampered with by medication?"

"Hannibal, I just… I *know* I'm a beta. Isn't that proof enough?"

"Unfortunately Will, it is not." Hannibal sighed, a forlorn sound like he was commiserating with Will in his misery. "I know how unhappy you are Will, how scared, but you have support. You are not alone in this."

Will felt his shoulders slump, ignoring as his cock ached, ignoring as Hannibal again used pheromones to calm him down, and just let it lull him. Not alone, he scoffed in his head. Even his body own body had betrayed him, it wasn't possible for him to be any more alone.

Chapter 6

Will tried to act like nothing was happening as they continued to talk. He stayed scooted in as close to the table as he could, letting it hide his lap.

Hannibal eased back on putting out phereomones, he wasn't planning on *doing* anything with Will, not this early, and he could see the man was already toeing the edge of a breakdown. The drugs he gave him were not long lasting, so he shouldn't be too uncomfortable. Will always smelled good, like earth and something sweet, but Hannibal wanted to roll in the scent of his Will now. Omega, aroused and fearful. It felt like Will wasn't the only one that had been drugged.

"If…" he trailed off like he thought he was going to be corrected but when Hannibal simply watched him he continue, "If I am, how do *you* plan to prove that. You told me to prove I'm a beta but it seems like it should be on you."

"You have omega phereomones in your system Will, you have an omega scent gland. You respond to an alpha command. You are aroused by being near an alpha scent."

It was an overwhelming amount of evidence and Will could feel the tears pressing, bringing up both hands to cover his face, trying to get control of himself.

He felt Hannibal move closer and scrambled out of his chair, knocking it over in his haste to put space between them. Hannibal stopped, hand almost to his tea cup, clearly clearing the table and Will couldn't help the whimper from making it's way out, overwhelmed. His breathing started coming out in harsh pants like he couldn't get enough air.

Hannibal's face softened at the sound and he set down the cups, moving towards Will with his hands up, showing that he was harmless when they both knew he was anything but. He didn't move away as Hannibal touched him though, a hand cupping the side of his face while the other one pulled his hand down away from his face so he could see him.

They were close enough that Will felt himself press against Hannibal's thigh, but the other man didn't acknowledge it at all, just tipped Will's face up until he gave in and made eye contact. "Come on Will, breathe with me."

They stayed that way until Will's breathing slowed down, until he didn't think he was going to pass out. As soon as he was under control Hannibal's hands dropped and he stepped back, giving him space.

It was hard to be defiant with tears running down his cheeks, with his body reacting to being so close to the other man, but he kept his chin tilted up, daring Hannibal to try something. His response was a blank look, but he could see the fondness in it, he could always read the other man better than anyone.

"It was a lot of information. I'd like to talk about why you are so resistent to the idea of being an omega, if that is okay. I suggest you retire to your room for a bit to get your

thoughts together and we can sit and talk in a bit."

His face burned red, he was sure that Hannibal expected that he was going to do more than get his thoughts together, he could feel the head of his cock rubbing wetly against the inside of his underwear, and he was struck by the thought that it might happen anytime he was close to an alpha.

He nodded his understanding of what Hannibal was saying but mumbled out, "What if-" The words stuck in his throat, and he was certain you couldn't die from embarrassment but he kind of wished he could at the moment. It was bad enough here, where it was just him and Hannibal - someone who he had already come to terms with seeing him at his worst, but what if it happened in front of *Jack* .

As always Hannibal read him without him needing to say much. "I think you are just keyed up. Scent glands are sensitive, having an alpha focus on it is probably what did it. I think you should be fine once you settle down."

He swallowed thickly and nodded. "Okay."

"I will come fetch you in a bit."

"Okay, thanks."

Belatedly as he climbed the stairs he realized he should have asked if he could help clean up, though he didn't know why. The man didn't want his help before, and it would be more uncomfortable for both of them. Hannibal probably wanted him to clear out of the room as much as he wanted to retreat.

Back in his room he shut the door and leaned back against it, scrubing a hand over his face hard enough to hurt, trying to use it to make him focus. It wasn't until then that he realized it might be awkward for Hannibal, he could smell himself and he knew that Alphas were made to be attracted to omegas just as much as the other way, and here he was in his house, putting out phereomones without meaning to, getting hard just because the man touched him. He needed to get control of himself.

With a sigh he glanced down at himself and headed towards the bathroom. His hand hovered over the knobs, torn between a nice warm shower and jerking himself off, or blasting a cold shower to get rid of his problem without rewarding himself at all for having it. He rested his head against the tile and chewed on his bottom lip. Hannibal would probably be able to smell it on him.

He rolled his eyes at himself as he flipped on the water, and he was going to make it cold, get rid of his problem as quickly as he could, but found himself easing into hot water instead. He closed his eyes and hesitantly reached down, hissing at how good it felt to wrap his hand around himself. He wanted to get it over with, and tried to keep his mind blank, but it wasn't like that had ever worked for him.

He couldn't help but picture Hannibal's hand on his neck, smelling so *fucking good* , the way it had felt when he had brushed against his thigh, the effort it had taken not to rut against him

like a dog. He rocked into his fist, something between a moan and mewl making it out of his throat. He shoved his other hand in his mouth to keep the noises he was making quiet, glancing at the bathroom door like he thought the man would come in.

No. It felt… rude to be thinking of Hannibal, to be using the man like that to get off and he tried to force his mind back to more normal thoughts. Thoughts he should want as a beta. Of Alana, of soft skin beneathe him, but he could feel him moving further from an orgasm, his body not going soft - that would be too easy - but the edge moving out of grasp and he let out an aggravated sigh.

His body wanted something else, wanted to be pinned down, wanted someone strong over him. He grunted, moving his hand too roughly, punishing himself for the thoughts. His only comfort, and it could only be a comfort here like this, was he knew the thoughts he'd already had of Hannibal before this entire omega mess hadn't been entirely platonic. He didn't know what exactly they had been but now, with the man smelling so Alpha, it was even harder to deny. Maybe he *had* been an omega all along, maybe that was why he was drawn to him.

Closer to cumming he slid his thumb over the tip, running through the precum there before it was washed away in the water. He pressed his thighs together and chewing his lip reached behind him, even though he was certain he wasn't producing slick. That he *couldn't* because he was a beta.

Face red and eyes scanning the room like he was going to get caught he slid two fingers down his ass, pressing to see if he felt any slick. He didn't, but as his fingers brushed over his entrance his cock twitched, jolting in his hand as a low moan was dragged out of him. So close to orgasm he didn't think about, just pressed his fingers a little harder, not pentrating just *there* and it only took a few more strokes and he was cumming.

He gasped, trying to catch his breath, hand sliding a few more times to ease him down from the orgasm, intentionally sliding his thumb across the over sensitive tip before he let go completely, staring at the strands of white in the water as they slid down the drain. His mind was muddled, thighs clenching, still trying to catch up with his body's pleasure.

When he came back he winced, trying not to think about what had pushed him over the edge, focusing instead on the idea that he hadn't been producing slick. He clamped down on that thought like a dog holding a bone, clinging to it to keep himself from having a breakdown.

He scrubbed at his skin until it was pink and warm to the touch, somehow sure that Hannibal would still be able to smell it on him, before he got out. He had no idea how long he had been in the shower, and hoped that Hannibal hadn't tried to collect him already.

As he got dressed he reached up to touch his neck, fingers over the gland there. He had a vague idea of noticing it before but dismissing it, and it just didn't make sense with either set of memories. It was definitely there though. With a huff he picked up his phone from the bedside table, glancing through the messages. There were a few from Alana, a text letting him know how his dogs were doing. Asking if he needed anything.

And there were three missed calls from Jack. His stomach twisted as he looked at it, it didn't look like the man had left a message, thought Will knew he did that just to make Will have to

call him back. On a good day seeing the name on his phone made him twitchy, today it made his stomach twist and his anxiety spike. He touched the screen, preparing to call him back, but pulled his hand away as he glanced at the door to his room.

It wouldn't be the first time he had let Hannibal stand between him and Jack, hell, he had already swallowed his pride and asked Hannibal to keep Jack off his back. He slid the phone in his pocket, a petty part of him hoping that it would upset Jack if he had Hannibal call him back instead, if he ignored his call.

Not long after Hannibal was at his door and Will gave him as close to a smile as he could, though couldn't stop his mouth from twisting down when he took a step, the weight of the phone against his thigh. Still not sure what he was going to do about it.

"Will, is everything okay?"

He let out a puff of air through his nose, trying to make it a laugh but too stressed to do it successfully. He dropped his hand over his pocket an muttered, "I have a couple missed calls from Jack, I gotta call him." Without looking he could feel Hannibal's disapproval, but he didn't risk looking up.

"What did he call about?"

Will shrugged. "Didn't leave a message."

His shoulders rolled in, hunching a little as he pulled out the phone, and when he simply stood there holding it in his hand Hannibal took a small step forward, head tilted as he tried to catch his eyes. "Would you like me to call him back and see what it is about?"

"You don't have to do that. It's probably just… just a case."

"Which you are in no state right now to handle." The phone was plucked out of his hands but he didn't really fight it. "I will call him and get any information you may need, if you'd like to go down to the study."

Will took one step but stopped, lifting his eyes to Hannibal's and holding them, he wanted to word it in a way that didn't sound like he was being difficult but he wasn't exactly his forte. "No. I mean, yeah, you can call him, but he was calling me. I should at least be in the same room, I'm not a child."

"No you are not." It was murmurred, a thread of amusement in the words but Hannibal nodded, "Of course. I will call him downstairs."

"Thank you."

They were nearly to the steps when Hannibal caught his arm, forcing him to turn and look at him, "If he is calling about a case you will not be going, Will."

He hadn't expected the firm tone and his shoulders went back, straightening from the hunch, his hands in fist at his sides. "I will if I want to."

“As your psychiatrist and your handler, I’m telling you that are in no state of mind to be going to a crime scene.”

“I’ll just call him myself.” Will tried to snatch his phone out of Hannibal’s hands but the man pulled it back out of reach, and the anger flooding Will’s system felt good after the fear and frustration he had felt all day. “Give me my phone.” Hannibal watched him and Will settled into his stance, voice lowering slightly, “If you use an alpha tone with me right now it isn’t going to go great for either of us.”

Hannibal thought he should end this quickly, could use the alpha tone, or really he could bring Will down without it. He always had been able to bring him down each time he wound him up and this was no different. He stepped into his space, raising an eyebrow when Will gave ground, shuffling dangerously close to the stairs. His eyes darted to them and back, unable to stop his amusement from making it’s way into the words, “The stairs are behind you, surely being closer to me is a better alternative than falling down them.”

His response was bared teeth. Honestly he was delighted by the sudden tantrum, even though he was careful to only show mild disapproval. He wondered what had brought it on so quickly. A glance at the phone and he was sure it had to do with Jack. His own lip curled into a snarl when he thought about how the other Alpha abused Will, pushed him to the edge without being able to pull him back. Simply abandoned him there.

A whine filled the hallway and Hannibal realized Will had taken the snarl, the wave of alpha anger, towards him and he was quickly losing his defiant stance in the face of it. Already eyes dropped to the floor, shoulders up around his ears.

“Will, if you’d like to make the phone call you are more than welcome to.” He looked up at that, eyes darting down to the phone, but he made no attempt to go for it. “Your pheromones are all over the place, do you want to be at a crime scene right now surrounded by violence and alphas? To lose yourself in a killer when right now you aren’t even found in your own skin?”

His throat bobbed at he swallowed, and slowly his body eased. “No.” He shook his head, but met Hannibal’s eyes. “You didn’t use anything alpha.”

“You aren’t here to be bullied, Will. You are allowed to have your own thoughts, to make your own decisions. No matter what the outcome of your status. I will see to it.” He didn’t make him dwell on it, “Let us go downstairs and talk to Uncle Jack.”

Chapter 7

He settled Will onto the couch, sitting near enough to him that he'd be able to hear the conversation. Trying to ease him down from his defensiveness. He opened the phone and looked at the keypad before he looked back to Will and lowered it.

"Do you want to call him back? I will be right here to support anything you may need."

Will looked at the phone and chewed his lip, and Hannibal could smell the sheen of shame on the other man when he shook his head, looking down at his hands. His voice wobbled, "I'd rather you."

Hannibal nodded, pleased. To stay under the radar he rarely challenged Jack alpha to alpha and there was something exhilarating about getting to do it now, especially in relation to Will. He dialed the number, bringing the phone to his ear.

Jack answered on the first ring and Hannibal had to pull the phone away from his ear at the snarl. ' *About time! Do you know how many times I've called? I expect you to answer when I call."*

He eyed the phone, intentionally not looking at Will. Was this always how the other man talked to him? He could feel the frown in his words and did nothing to hide it. "Jack? This is Hannibal."

There was a pause and Jack's voice came back over the line, much calmer than how he had answered. " *Hannibal, is everything okay? This is Will's phone?"*

"We did discuss that he would spend the weekend with me while we figured out his status. He is under a lot of stress, are you calling to check on him?" He could practically smell the guilt through the phone, they both knew the man wasn't.

The hesitation was longer, " *I'd like to speak to Will* ."

In his peripheal he could see Will's shoulders hunch. "He is indisposed right now. I can pass along a message if you'd like."

He could sense Jack deciding what to do on the other side of the phone, and when he spoke again his voice was just controlled enough that Hannibal knew how angry he was. " *There may be a case, we just have pictures right now. I'd like Will to come look at them* ."

"We have a meeting Monday to discuss his status, we can talk then, though at this time I think it would be in Will's best interest to not be involved in a case. I'm sure you understand." Jack started to say something but Hannibal spoke over him, "We will see you Monday Jack, have a good rest of your weekend." And he hung up.

He turned his attention to Will, but he was staring at the phone in Hannibal's hands, the smell of distress heavy on him. He reached forward to set it down on the table, "Will?"

His eyes snapped to Hannibal but didn't meet his eyes, keeping them somewhere around his chin. His voice was a distracted mutter, "I should go."

"We talked about this, yes?"

Will shook his head, "We decided a crime scene would be bad. This is just pictures."

"Does Jack always speak to you like that?" It was a deliberate redirection, a question he knew would fluster him.

Will's jaw tightened, defensive. "I don't know what you're talking about."

Hannibal let out a small sigh. His Will was meant to be an omega, he had no doubts. "You can look at whatever he wants Monday."

He got a nod in return and he had expected more of a fight. Instead Will settled back further on the couch, crossing his arms. "So what now?"

"I'd like to talk about why you think being omega is such a horrible thing." He put up his hand to stop Will's automatic response. "We don't need to talk in reference to you. I want to talk more about your general feelings on it. What is wrong with someone being omega?"

He could see the flippiant words on Will's lips and he made a quiet disapproving sound, watching as Will's shoulders tensed and then his whole body eased. "Fine."

Will leaned forward and licked his lips, hesitant. "When I was a cop, do you know what it was like responding to a domestic to find an omega bloody and crying and there was nothing we could do. Alphas are *allowed* to discipline omegas any way they want as long as they don't kill them. Even if we wanted to do something the omega was usually just terrified we'd take them away from the Alpha that had just beat them half to death."

"Will-"

"I responded once to a public disturbance. An omega had unexpectedly gone into heat at a bar and every unmated alpha in the place fucked them while they were so looped out with heat craze they didn't know where they were. And it was legal, because an omega in heat's consent defers to their alpha. If they don't have an alpha, then *any* alpha. No wonder there are barely any omegas left in the world, the suicide rate is through the roof." His voice broke.

The distress was thick and heavy in the room, Will shook, hands by his sides now in tight fists. And under the duress was the smell of fear and panic and Hannibal moved before he thought better of it, grabbing Will's arm to pull him closer.

At the contact Will startled, jerking backwards, eyes wide. Hannibal didn't force it but kept his grip on his arm, trying to ground him and let him calm down.

He didn't expect him to keep talking. "And I've seen cases from Jack where the victims were omegas, and if the killer was an alpha they probably just knelt there, unable to do anything else if commanded, and waited for their lives to end." He pulled his hand out of

Hannibal's grip so he could run his hands over his face, "I mean, if I'm an omega the Ripper could walk right up to me and command me to stay and I'd just let him kill me."

Will's face was buried in his hands so Hannibal didnt do much to hide the quirk of his lips, unable to help poking at that. "The Ripper is an alpha?"

"What?"

"That would imply the Ripper is an alpha, but I haven't heard that."

It distracted Will from his misery for a moment, lips pressing together as he thought, and Hannibal did have to admit he didn't think he could keep Will away from his work completely. Not when he looked so beautifully pained when he thought about crime scenes. "It's not official. I think he is, not enough proof either way."

He really wanted to push it, to ask why Will came to that conclusion, but it could wait until another time. Right now they had another focus. "You must know those are extremes cases, Will."

Will dropped his hands and finally met his eyes, glaring, "You want me to tell you whats wrong with being an omega, tell me something that is *good* about it."

The adrenalin, the distress, and the omega scent coming off Will was stronger, cloying and filling his nose. He wanted to soothe him, but instead he leaned back and watched the man try to bring himself back under control. Will struggled, but his breathing finally evened out, his heart calming down.

Will kept his eyes down and his voice was quieter, desperate, "Tell me what is *good* about it." He said it like he was begging for a silver lining.

"It seems like such a negative because you're unwilling to give in to any of the benefits of being an omega. You don't allow yourself to be cared for, to be calmed."

"Because I'm not a pet."

"With your empathy disorder you would particularly thrive in an omega role. You can see it in the way you care for Abigail."

He had meant it to be soothing, but Will's body tensed, "I catch killers. I'm good at catching killers. That is what I thrive at."

"You don't seem to be thriving." Before Will could get worked up he continued, "You are very good at it. You're a fighter. Imagine how much stronger you'd be if you had the full support of an Alpha backing you up. You know a healthy dynamic pair is nothing like what you described from your days as an officer."

There was a disbelieving snort from Will. "How healthy can it be when your partner *owns* you." There was a wisp of something in the words, though. Too soft be longing, too threadbare to be want. But something was there.

“Of course you do not need to bond with someone to have the support of an Alpha. Isn’t that what I’ve been doing as your handler even just the last day?” He reached out, forcing the contact as he tilted Will’s face up, “Isn’t that what some part of you has been doing since the first day we started chatting? Looking for support?”

“It’s not the same.”

Will felt warm under his hand and ignoring his dirty look he slid his hand up to his forehead. In the scans he had seen signs of something wrong, maybe the start of a case of Encephalitis and originally he had planned on letting it run its course to see what would happen. He had nearly forgotten about it upon discovering about the possiblity of him being omega, and found that path much more enticing. “You have a fever, perhaps we should follow up on the neurolgical tests.”

He pushed away Hannibal’s hand and rolled his eyes but didn’t argue. He only glanced around the room, “So what is next. Wanna go show me some happy dynamic couples? Show me what I’m missing? Convince me that being a victim is a blessing?”

“Would it help? You have brought up bonding or a mate several times now. There is nothing requiring omegas to bond, but it seems to be your main concern.”

“What?” A blush worked it’s way up his cheeks. “No.” Will felt like everything he said dug him in a deeper hole, and he really just wanted to be home with his dogs. He glanced away, “Can I just go home Hannibal? I can do whatever tests you want, give you whatever proof you want, but I want to go home.”

“You’ve had several tests that prove you’re an omega. I think the question isn’t what I want, its what do you need to accept this.”

“Is that a no on me going home?” There was a small flash of annoyance on Hannibal’s face, and Will would be lying if he said he wasn’t pleased that he could get that strong a response form the man, aware that not much affected him. “Right.”

“This afternoon Jack would like you to get a blood test. As I said, now that we are aware of what should or should not artificially be in your system. Do you consent to this?”

“Like I actually have a choice.” Hannibal just watched him so he finally rolled his shoulders and muttered, “Sure, why not.”

“Perhaps we can get a brain scan as well, I will call and see if that is possible.” The fight had currently left Will, at least for the moment. “In the meantime, I have notes I need to go over. Would you like a book?”

Another mildly annoyed sound came from Will but he rolled his shoulders. “I can work on lesson plans. I brought what I need with me just in case.”

“Perfect.” It was what he had hoped for, as he got the two of them settled in the study. He sat at his desk and offered the other smaller desk to Will but he chose to curl up on the couch instead, notes cradled in his lap, immediately lost in his work.

Teaching was a good career for him, he could clearly see that Will enjoyed it. It was less of a strain on his well being too.

“I have classes Monday.”

“They are having your classes this week covered, as a precaution.”

“Of course. Something else in my life I have no say in, right?” He didn’t raise his eyes from his notepad, “How am I supposed to trust anyone when you’ve all gone behind my back so thoroughly?”

“You could choose to take it as a compliment, Will. Jack is an alpha but was very wary of how you were going to respond.”

“Jack’s always *wary* of how I’m going to respond.” He curled around his notes tighter, loneliness wrapping around his words. “Everyone is *wary* of me.”

“I’m not, Will.” He didn’t look up, but Hannibal could see the tension ease from his shoulders at the words and he smiled to himself as he settled in with his patient notes.

They were nearly to the doctor’s office when Will realized they weren’t going to the lab. He shifted in his seat, trying to see if there was anything that was familiar. “Where are we going?”

“Blood tests, remember?”

“Yeah, I remember. We aren’t going to the lab?”

“No.” Will’s agitation filled the car, his body shiftingly angrily with the lack of information. Hannibal let him stew for a moment before he gave in. “Jack indicated that tests should be down by an unbiased third party in case it becomes an issue.”

“An issue?” He could feel when Will settled uncomfortably, crossing his arms, “If I continue to challenge that I’m an omega.” He sounded disgusted, “If it has to go to court.”

Hannibal only hummed a response, leaving Will to turn against the door and huddle there. Well aware that things were going to get a bit worse for the man. He had suggested to Jack for legal reasons that they should get the tests done somewhere else, and finding a doctor had been left up to him.

He had chosen one that had rather traditional views on Omegas. He was curious how Will would handle someone treating him as an omega without the gentle coddling, someone that had no previous relationship with him. He had a feeling Will was not going to do well with it and he was looking forward to getting to comfort him after.

“They are going to do a check up and then take blood work.”

“Great.”

Hannibal thought about calling him out on his rudeness but let it go, the distress was coming off of Will in waves and when he smelled so omega it was difficult to not be gentle with him. He'd come so far in just the last day, and the fact that it seemed to be brought on by being around him, being around an alpha, was perfect. It made it likely that the more time he spent with Hannibal the more he would evolve.

He parked the car and when he got out Will followed at his heels, slightly behind him with his head down. In the waiting room he nudged Will towards a chair and then went to check in before settling in the seat next to him.

When Will's name was called he glanced towards the door, "Did you want my assitance when you go in with the doctor or would you prefer to be on your own?"

A quiet snort, "I think I'll be fine." Despite the words Will was slow to push to his feet, shoving his hands in his pockets as he followed the nurse.

She brought him to a small room and told him to take a seat, that the doctor would be with him shortly. His mouth twisted as he nodded, slumping into one of the chairs, he really wished they could have just done this at the lab. He hated doctors on a good day.

The nurse looked at her clipboard, pausing at the door as she looked back up, "Is your Alpha here as well?"

He stared at her, caught off guard by the words, on the tip of his tongue to tell her that he didn't have an alpha, or maybe even that he was a beta despite how he scented. He felt stupid when all he managed to get out was, "What?"

"Your alpha? Are you here on your own?" There was a quiet disappointment in the words, like he had done something awful and he couldn't help respond to it.

"My… handler. He's in the waiting room."

Immediately her face lit back up, the approval coming off her in waves. "Perfect. Aren't you the brave one coming in here by yourself." She spoke to him like he was a child and he could feel his shoulders hunch, a bad feeling settling in his stomach. She didn't wait for him to answer just stepped into the hallway pulling the door almost closed.

He swallowed hard and tried to push his nerves down. It was just a check up. He didn't have to wait long, barely having time to wallow in his confusion when there was a brisk knock on the door and then an older man entered without waiting for a response. He shut the door behind him and gave Will a smile as he moved into the room.

"Hello Will. I'm Dr. Claude. I see you are in for a check up and to have some blood drawn at the request of the fbi." His head tilted, smile intentionally soft and harmless, "I had to double check the paperwork, I can't imagine what an omega would be doing with the fbi."

The end of the sentence lilted up like it was a question and Will's shoulders hunched more. He glanced towards the door, almost wishing Hannibal was with him, before he swallowed and tried to speak up, "I work there. As a profiler."

The doctor shook his head even before he finished speaking, “Too harsh of work for you I’d think. What does your alpha have to say about that.” He patted the table, “Over here, it’s okay. We’ll get you checked out.”

“I don’t have an alpha.” He stumbled to his feet, it wasn’t a true alpha command but it was an undercurrent in the words, enough that he’d have to work to fight it and he didn’t like it at all. As soon as he was close enough to the doctor to touch the man reached out to grab his jaw, tilting his head up and back to bare his throat.

It was unexpected, the man touching him like he had every right to, and he tried to jerk away but the man’s voice came out lower, a full command now. “Be still.” It didn’t completely freeze him but it made it nearly impossible to pull away, and a whine dragged out of his throat without his consent, his pulse speeding up.

“And not bonded at your age. You poor thing.” He realized the doctor was looking for bonding marks. His jaw was dropped and he eased back to sit on the table, too overwhelmed for the moment to argue against his treatment. “When was your last heat?”

“I’ve never had one.”

The man’s eyebrows went up and he looked down at the paperwork like he was just reading it for the first time. “You’ve been on suppresants your entire life?”

“No.” He realized it was difficult to explain and huffed out a breath, “Maybe. I guess.”

“Hmm. Have you ever been knotted?”

Will’s entire face flushed red, and he found himself squirming on the table, desperately wishing this was over. He could scent the alpha on the doctor, maybe even that he was trying to calm him, but it just made his panic spike. He couldn’t help the snarl in his words, “I’m just here to get blood work done. Why don’t we just get to that?”

The doctor looked unimpressed. “Your Alpha has scheduled you for a check up, so you can answer my questions or I can check for myself.”

All at once Will realized the man was threatening to *check* if he had been knotted before, though he wasn't even sure he could do that. He realized the man could probably force him into it as a command and he could feel a panic attack coming on. He scrambled off the table, pressing into the corner of the room and growled.

“Is Will Graham’s Alpha here?”

Hannibal looked up, tucking away his phone as he moved to his feet, heading towards the nurse. “I am his handler. Is everything okay?”

There was a tension around her eyes, like something was not. “Of course. Would you please come back and assist?”

“Did Will ask for me?”

The tension increased. “He is having a difficult time, your assitance would be helpful, or if you’d prefer we can simply restrain him.”

“No, I will handle him.” He didn’t expect the drop in his stomach at the thought of another alpha restraining Will, and had to resist the urge to growl. He followed the nurse and he knew exactly what room they were in before she reached the door, could smell Will's distress, could hear the frantic whine of an anxious omega, and his fist clenched to keep from shoving the nurse out of the way and entering the room at a faster speed.

The door opened to a doctor standing in the middle of the room, clearly unhappy, and on the other side of the room Will was backed into the corner, teeth bared. He looked feral, eyes wide, pupils dilated and Hannibal couldn’t help the wave of fondness. Couldn't be more proud of how fiesty the man was. Will’s eyes darted to him and the whining quieted, locking eyes as Hannibal moved towards him.

He stopped in front of him, “Will?”

“I won’t let him touch me.”

He might be unpredictable, but Hannibal knew Will wouldn’t have refused like this unless the doctor had overstepped, if he had done more than a check up, and he couldn’t stop a flutter of possessive rage as he glanced over his shoulder at the doctor. “What happened?”

“Your omega is very difficult. I was attempting to have some fairly simple questions answered and you see what happened.”

He turned his attention back to Will, the man’s face red as he met Hannibal’s eyes and then looked at the floor. It was humiliating but at least he had Hannibal to stand between them, knew that he wouldn’t let the doctor touch him like that. “He wanted to check if I’d been… *knotted* .” He practically choked on the word.

Hannibal reached out to take Will’s arm and pull him off the wall, pleased when he let himself be led to the table and sat on it without complaint. Once he was settled he turned towards the doctor, “I fail to see how that would be a part of having his blood drawn. I know it was explained that this was a unique situation, I’d ask for some professionalism.” His voice was cold, meant to cow the other man, and he could feel Will leaning into his space. Trying to get closer to him.

He stared off with the doctor, the alpha scent in the room thick, before the doctor looked away as he grabbed his clipboard. Hannibal stepped aside, unable to help the smug look on his face, and watched the doctor move towards Will.

Will whined when he got close, but Hannibal moved around the table to settle one hand on his shoulder, steadying him. Supporting him.

The doctor barely said anything else, checking Will’s vitals as the nurse took blood. There was discontent in the room, but it wasn’t from Will, and that was all he cared about.

They finished up quickly, practically pushing them out the door once the blood was drawn, and Hannibal led Will out with a hand at the small of his back. He should smooth things over, make nice with the doctor, after all he had done exactly as he hoped. He was pleased to find that Will's easy compliance with himself didn't extend to just any alpha. But his inner alpha couldn't be convinced to make nice with an alpha that had upset Will so badly.

Afterwards they moved to the attached building next door, Hannibal had been able to use his own reputaion and the backing of the fbi to get Will in for a scan right away, and the staff there was much more clinical. They barely spoke to Will, just got to business, and they were out in an impressively quick time.

For his part Will didn't say much until they were all the way in the parking lot, but there he leaned in closer to Hannibal, his voice soft. "Thank you."

He smiled as he pulled open the passenger door and eased him in the seat. "You are welcome Will." He shut the door and went around to the other side, slipping in. "I am sorry it was such an upsetting experience."

Will shrugged, "Not your fault." He picked at a loose thread on his jeans, "He really thought I was an omega." When Hannibal said nothing he sighed, "How long until we get the test results."

"The scans should be back with in a day or two and Jack will want to discuss your other results monday so I'm sure the blood tests will be done as soon as possible." He stopped at a light and glanced at Will, "What do you think the results will be, Will?"

Will's temper flared, his jaw clenched but he only slumped in his seat, looked out the window and sulked.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When they arrived back at the house Will headed straight for the guest room, hunched in on himself and Hannibal let him go lick his wounds. He had done well, he was proud of him. Pleased at how quickly Will looked to him for safety and protection.

He made his way to the study and noticed Will had left his class notes on the table. He glanced at the way the man had gone, sure he wouldn't see him for awhile, and picked up the notebook. He read over the small print, the scattered ideas, running his finger over words written in the margins. Oh Will, what a scattered mind he had.

The actual plans were well put together, clearly Will cared about his work, but his notes on the individual cases were much more chaotic. He shuffled through them, looking for notes on the Ripper. Curious to see what Will thought when he didn't think anyone would see.

Disappointingly he didn't find any on the Ripper and he wondered where Will kept them and why they weren't with his other notes. Maybe later he could poke at it and see why Will thought the man was an alpha.

He slid the papers back where they were and settled at his desk to look through his own notes and wondered how long Will would stay hidden away.

Hannibal was in the kitchen, half way through prep for dinner when he heard soft foot steps heading towards him, carefully scenting the sweet smell of omega as Will approached. Just outside the kitchen he could sense the man hesitate and without looking up from the vegetables he was cutting he called out, "You can come in."

A small shuffle, he thought maybe he had startled him, and then Will appeared in the doorway. He seemed more subdued than usual, leaning against the doorway. He scuffed his foot before looking up, "I'm sorry, I've been rude."

"Perfectly okay Will, it has been a lot of information. I'm glad you found a place here that you could go to and get your thoughts together."

Will nodded and moved further into the kitchen, glancing around at the prep. "Do you need help?"

"I have it under control. You're welcome to pour us each a glass of wine though."

"That I can do." Will moved easily around the kitchen, he felt comfortable there, and he would prefer a whiskey but wine would do. The time spent in his room he had gone through anger and denial, had taken the time to let the rage he'd felt at how he had been treated by the

doctor fade away, and now he wanted some kind of normalcy. In his gut there was a tight knot because the evidence that he was omega was mounting, but he didn't want to think about that right now.

"How are you feeling?"

"Like I want to punch that doctor in the face." The corner of Hannibal's mouth lifted and Will found an answering smile on his face. "I'm okay. Trying not to think too much about anything. Miss my dogs."

Hannibal made a soft sound of acknowledgment, watching as Will leaned on the counter, his eyes on his hands as he cooked. He was an excellent provider, as a good alpha should be. "You will be able to see them soon. Hopefully the accomodations here haven't been too terrible."

"I didn't mean it like that." Will rubbed his sleeve and his voice was more careful, "Will I get to see my dogs again? I know I live pretty far out."

Hannibal kept his voice easy, "Of course. I'm sure no matter what happens no one would wish to deprive you of your pack."

At least one tension eased from Will's shoulders, Hannibal could say it however carefully he wanted to, but as of right now he was his handler and it would be his decision. Will looked down at the table and rolled his shoulders. He tried to keep the next words from making it out of his mouth because he didn't want to upset Hannibal, but he couldn't let it go. "You looked at my notes."

There was an almost unnoticable pause from Hannibal and then the man nodded, no shame on his face at being caught. "I did. How did you know?"

"They were out of order. I know they look like chaos but, but I know. Why?"

Will didn't sound mad, just curious, and Hannibal weighed his options. "I was interested in your notes on the Ripper. After your comment earlier."

"Oh." He shifted, taking a long sip of his wine. "I keep those separate, I have a lot of notes with the files. I didn't bring them."

Hannibal slid the pan he was working on in the oven, checked the temp and then turned to Will to pick up his own glass of wine. "And why a separate file."

Will looked away, worrying at his lip with his teeth, hesitant to explain even though he knew that he had said things like it to Hannibal before, that the man was unflappable in his calm. "I can get lost in the files sometimes, at what I see in The Ripper. Keeping them separate makes sure I don't get distracted."

Hannibal hid a smile at the words behind his glass of wine, and tilted his head. "So why do you think he's an alpha?"

"A lot of killers are. It's a fair guess."

“You spoke of it more than simply a guess, you were sure.”

Will frown, downing the glass of wine. He set it down, rolling the stem back and forth between his fingers. “It’s… the kills feel calm. Controlled. He’s a confident Alpha, and he’s used to being in control. Jack thinks its a beta because the kills are so precise, because the kills don’t have more anger.” He set the glass down and his voice lowered, “He certainly loses his temper enough.”

“Not every Alpha is loud and violent. Jack uses that as an excuse.”

Will was uncomfortable talking about Jack that way, felt like he was betraying him and motioned towards the wine, “Is it all right if I have another glass? I promise I will know my limit and not pass out like last night.”

“Of course Will. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.”

“I’m not.”

He wanted to tell Will that his loyalty was misplaced, he had seen how careless Jack was with him but it wouldn’t matter anymore. He’d make sure to stand between the two of them, he would take care of Will where Jack had failed him so badly.

He settled against the counter and waited until Will met his eyes, “So what would you like to talk about while we wait on dinner?”

They had a lot in common, and the way Will thought, the way he voiced his mind was fascinating. The conversation flowed easily through dinner until they found themselves sitting at the table with empty plates, Will more than a little tipsy. Calm though, relaxed.

And Will with his guard down was a beautiful thing.

The next morning Hannibal was already down stairs, showered and dressed and finishing up making an early lunch, by the time Will made his way down. The man had drank enough that he had been easy to send to bed while Hannibal went to check on his captive in the basement, enough that he hadn’t had to drug him. “Good morning, Will.”

“Morning.” He shuffled his feet and glanced up the stairs and then back to Hannibal. “There wasn’t a pill this morning. I’m supposed to take heat suppressants, right?”

Will could feel the man was pleased and part of him hated to be so … obedient. But the denial he was holding on to was thin and the worst possible thing he could imagine would be going in to heat. Hannibal nodded and left him in the kitchen for a few moments before he returned with a pill, dropping it in Will’s open palm. He looked at it and chewed his lip, “Can I see the bottle?”

“Why?”

Will's head snapped up at the cold tone, at the edge of alpha anger in it, and his shoulders hunched. He hadn't expected it and he wasn't sure what he had done wrong. He just wanted to know what he was taking. He shrugged and swallowed the pill, hoping that would appease him. "Just want to know what I'm taking, I think that is fair."

"Of course Will. Pardon my response. Currently we are getting it from a private source to keep it off the record, for you, until things are settled. I will get you the information."

"No, that's okay, I trust you."

"As you should."

Will's mouth quirked but before he could answer Hannibal's phone rang. He kept his eyes on Will as he pulled it out, only a quick glance down to see who it was. His body tensed at Jack's name, and though he couldn't see the phone Will responded to his tension with his own.

He pushed the button to answer, bringing it to his ear, moving away from Will in what he hoped wasn't too obvious a manner. The frown said he did but he didn't try to get closer to hear the conversation.

There wasn't much said, Hannibal hummed and spoke a few soft words, ending the conversation by reaffirming that they would meet monday morning. He hung up and tilted his head, wondering how to handle Will.

"Well?"

Hannibal set the phone down on the counter and tapped his fingers next to it, "Are you hungry? I was about to make lunch, you slept in."

"Don't give me that *Doctor Lector* . Tell me what he said."

"The blood tests are in. I do have to say, to get a turn around time of one day on the weekend no less, your results are very important to Jack."

"Hannibal."

"Omega phereomones. Higher levels than your previous test, a common result of an Omega going off suppresants. The doctor noted the presence of an omega scent gland on your neck and that apparently you are difficult."

Will stared at him, shocked even though deep down he hadn't expected any different. "I want to see them."

"He will have them Monday." He tried to grab his arm and pull him towards the table but Will jerked away from him.

"I want to see them now."

Hannibal stood to his full height, moving into Will's space, "We are going to sit and eat lunch, and we can discuss it all you want after. I'm not going to order you to sit, but I would appreciate it if you would."

And really, Will wanted to submit to that quiet authority. He found himself sliding into a seat, tilting his head down, eyes on the table. It was tense in the room for long seconds but then Hanniball's hand fell to his shoulder, giving it a small squeeze and a murmured 'good boy' and the tension was gone.

As always it was hard to stay angry as they ate, the man was such a good cook he could probably win Will over to just about anything.

Will dawdled over his plate, not sure what else they could discuss, and pretty over it. It felt like more talking than he'd had to do in years. He glanced up, making sure that Hannibal was done eating before he grabbed the plates and brought them to sink. Hannibal didn't tell him not to and after a few moments of watching him stood to help him clean up.

Will liked it, he felt good being useful. Eventually there was nothing left to do though and it was just the two of them sitting on either side of the table with coffee.

He didn't know what to say, what to ask, because what he wanted were comforting lies and Hannibal was nothing if not straight forward. He sipped his coffee, and glanced at the machine that made it and looked back down to his cup. There was no reason to have any coffee machine that complicated.

"Glaring at my coffee maker isn't going to get you any answers."

Grudgingly he looked back at Hannibal and made an annoyed sound. "What other answers are there left to get? I don't know what to do now."

"You accept the results, then."

"No." He looked back down to the cup. "Isn't there anything else? Any other test? We have to be missing something Hannibal, I know I'm not wrong about this."

Hannibal sipped his own coffee and something did occur to him, his heart speeding up just enough that he could feel it. Excited in a way that even killing didn't quite do for him anymore. "There is one other test that could be done, but you aren't going to like it."

"I haven't liked any of this." Will finished the coffee, "Don't play games with me, just tell me what you're thinking. I'm willing to try anything here."

"As you wish." He stood up and grabbed Will's cup, getting him another cup of coffee, keeping his back to him as he spoke. "Jack would probably have insisted on it eventually if you continue to disagree. None of the tests that have been done have been able to verify the presence or absense of an internal omega gland."

Even with his back to him he could feel Will staring at him. He took his time getting the coffee and when he finally turned back he wasn't disappointed by the look of horror on Will's

face. And he was the one that was overly dramatic, sure. He let a chuckle into his voice, “I don’t really think it requires quite that reaction Will.”

He set the coffee down but Will gently pushed it away, “You’re joking.”

“I know you didn’t like the doctor we saw yesterday, but we could probably get an appointment quickly with him based on the government contacts. I would stay with you the whole time and-”

“He sure as fuck will not touch me. No one is going to touch me.” His voice has spiked in panic.

“Will.” His tone was exasperated, slightly scolding in the way that made the other man’s shoulders slump. “This is a very straight forward test that could be done, I don’t think I have to tell you that your continued resistance to tests that would give you an answer is telling.”

“Jesus Hannibal, I don’t need some doctor to stick his fingers up my ass to tell me I’m a beta.”

Will’s face was red, going redder at the words and Hannibal let out a long disappointed sigh. “If you allow this test to be conducted Will, and you are correct in that you are a beta, then it will be an easy answer. If you do not have an omega gland and do not produce slick, then clearly something else is going on and we can take that to Jack. He can’t argue with that.”

That got Will’s attention as he squirmed, chewing his bottom lip. “Can’t they do like some kind of scan or xray?”

Hannibal kept his body relaxed, sensing him starting to give in. “No, it is much like getting a prostate exam. You’ve had one of those before?” Will shook his head but Hannibal had already expected that answer or the gland would have been noticed already. “It is just a medical procedure, nothing to be embarrassed about or afraid of.”

“I’m not afraid.” Will shook his head, crossing his arms tight over his chest. “I don’t want some stranger prodding at me like that. Definitely not that doctor from yesterday.” He shuddered at the thought of it, of how smug the man probably would be to get his way.

“I’m afraid I’m going to have to relay to Jack that you are being uncooperative, he too will find it suspicious that you’d resist a test with such a definitive answer.” Hannibal started to turn away but Will’s hand shot out, grabbing his arm.

“I just… maybe someone else could do it? That I know?”

For a brief moment Hannibal pictured Jack with his fingers pressed into Will and even though he knew that wasn’t what the man was thinking it still made a low growl vibrate through his chest. He shook his head to clear it, eyeing Will who had dropped his hand and stepped away at the sound. Instead he offered up, “Perhaps Alana, this is basic anatomy that she should have learned.”

“God, no.” Will shook his head, his eyes averted. “I mean I was thinking that you could. You were a surgeon, you’re a doctor. And I… I trust you.”

“Ah.”

When that was all Hannibal responded with Will stumbled back another step, “You don’t have to, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have asked, you’ve already done so much.”

Hannibal put his hand out and Will came forward to it immediately, and he settled it on the man’s shoulder, squeezing it softly to calm him. “Of course I will. If that is what would make you feel okay with it.”

A nervous huff of air left Will, shoulders lifting a little like he was relieved. “Yeah, thank you.”

Hannibal gave him a grin and then firmed up the hold on his shoulder, using it to turn him and push him towards the bathroom. “We can do it now if you’d like, get it over with. Perhaps you will have good news quickly.”

“Oh, now. Sure, I guess.”

“I will retrieve some supplies and I will be right back.”

Once Hannibal’s back was turned to Will he let the corner of his mouth tilt up, already half hard at the thought of Will submitting to this. He didn’t do anything as crass as touch himself, instead just enjoying the rub of his pants against his erection. There would be so many more opportunities in the future to do more. He wanted to savor it.

Armed with gloves and lube he returned to the bathroom to find Will nervously standing by the sink, looking anywhere but at him.

“Normally if we were at the doctor's office this would be a little more formal, but as it is just bare with me if it is a little awkward. I’ve not done an exam like this since I was in medical school. If you could please drop your pants and underwear and lean over the counter we can get started.”

Will didn’t move at all, big blue eyes full of panic meeting his and Hannibal set down the supplies on the counter before he reached out to pull him forward into a hug. Will melted against him like it was already second nature as Hannibal ran a soothing hand down the man’s back while he pressed the other to the back of his head to hold him in place. “It’s okay, Will.”

While he had him so close, and hoping to elicit a certain response from him during this exam he pushed out Alpha pheromones, as he had the day before. The effect they had on Will had previously been somewhat limited, but being around him, in his territory, the last two days made him more attuned, and he could feel when Will tensed slightly, could feel the hardness growing against his thigh. It was gratifying to see it start to have the effect without the assistance of any additional drugs. Progress.

He pulled back and gave a smile to Will's uneasy look, trying to shift his body away without Hannibal noticing that he was half hard. "Alright, the quicker we do this the quicker we will be done. So if you would please disrobe and turn to face the counter."

Will moved to do as he was told, flush all the way up to his ears as he shucked his pants and underwear, the friction of the cloth sliding over himself making his cock jump a little. Will glanced down at himself, frowning as he was yet again betrayed by his own body, and leaned over the counter.

Hannibal took a moment to admire the view before he stepped forward. He snapped on the gloves, intentionally loud to make Will startle before he picked up the lube. With the hand not holding it he reached out to press one gloved finger against Will's hole, rubbing slightly. Will's body tensed up and Hannibal tutted at him, "Please try to relax, Will."

"Easy for you to say." It was muttered into the crook of his arm but Will seemed to be trying to relax and Hannibal left his finger pressed there, rubbing small circles until Will's body wasn't so bow string tight. At least since the man had never even had a prostate exam he wasn't worried about Will realizing the way he was going to go about this wasn't exactly standard.

"Spread your legs a little more." He murmured it against Will's neck, watching the shiver down the man's back as he did as he was told, feet edging a bit more apart.

He removed his hand to open the lube, coating his fingers before he brought one back, repeating the same motion as before. Circling the pink pucker there, just barely putting pressure but not penetrating. After several moments there was an anxious shift of Will's body, and it was impossible to miss that he was hard, and Hannibal focused on continuing to put out alpha pheromones as he slid in the first finger, he wanted to make sure there was a positive association with the sensation.

A small gasp came from Will, and Hannibal had to wait several seconds for the man to relax, could feel him tense around his finger. So tight. His other hand slid up, circles at the small of his back, trying to ease him into relaxing.

He slowly worked one finger past the second knuckle, pulling it out and back in several times, glancing up at Will to monitor how he was doing. His head and shoulders had fallen to his arms, arching his back and pressing his ass up and Hannibal could almost imagine it was him presenting properly.

"I'm going to add another finger Will, it may be slightly uncomfortable." There was a docile nod and when he pulled out his finger he slid a second one in along it.

A small sound of discomfort came from Will but Hannibal shushed him, pressing his fingers in and out, scissoring them slightly, stretching him open. He was sure Will was going to notice something wasn't quite right, the man couldn't be so naive, but he was just holding the position. And if the fully hard cock hanging between his legs was anything to go by, it wasn't entirely unpleasant.

After a few minutes, as he watched Will's thighs tense as the man tried not to move, he curled his fingers to press against his prostate.

A startled moan slipped out of Will's throat, breath hitching, and Hannibal did it again, pressing fingers firmly against it. His voice came out indifferent and clinical. "That is your prostate, if there is an omega gland it should be slightly behind it." Instead of moving his fingers behind it he pressed hard into it again even as his hand on the small of Will's back pushed him down and forward. The tip of Will's dick bumped up against the side of the counter, leaving a smear of precum and he jerked his hips away out of instinct, shoving himself down hard on Hannibal's fingers and a broken moan came out, cut off as soon as Will could get ahold of himself. Precum dripped steadily onto the floor, forming a small puddle.

"Hannibal-" His head turned to try to look at him, face flushed and curls sweaty.

"I'm sorry Will, the discomfort should only be momentary." He was well aware it wasn't discomfort that made Will's voice shake and before he could answer he pressed his fingers in, searching for an omega gland. He wasn't entirely sure there would be one, he wasn't lying when he said that they hadn't been able to see it in the tests, but given the other parts he had he was certain that Will would. He tried not to get his hopes up, though.

"Hannibal," His name said in such a breathy pant made his own cock twitch. "Maybe-"

His fingers found the secondary bundle of nerves, an omega gland, pressing against it and whatever Will was going to say was lost as he howled like a cat in heat, body slamming back against his fingers.

Hannibal felt his eyes go wide, pleasure coursing through him at the discovery and pulled his fingers out while Will scrambled at the counter, trying to get control of himself. It meant Will may have the ability to produce slick when aroused, though he couldn't smell any and he wondered if for the first time he'd have to push a bit more. Softly he spoke, "Did you feel that? It is an omega gland, Will. Let me show you again."

"No, wait - Hannibal-"

It was too late, he was already pressing his fingers in again, rubbing against that spot and Will sobbed as he came, thick white cum across the front of the counter and onto the floor and Hannibal pressed against it again as the man's body clenched around him.

Vaguely he was aware that Will was crying and he rubbed his fingers against it again, nearly ready to give up when the smell of slick hit the air, faint but there. He pulled his fingers out, looking at them, before he glanced at Will and sure that he was beyond noticing he slid them back in. One more rub at the omega gland and the smell of slick was much stronger. He pulled his fingers out and couldn't control the elation when they were covered in it, rubbing his fingers together.

Will was a wreck, Hannibal could see his nose twitching, that he could smell the slick as well. He could barely catch the whimpered words as he sobbed, "It can't.. It isn't true. It's not."

He slid his fingers fully out and pulled off the gloves, hovering near the man but not touching him. “Will-”

“ *Get out* .” The words were snarled and Will flinched even though they had come from him. He opened his mouth but another sob pulled out before any words as he tried to push to his feet, shaking. “Get…” His voice lost the snarl, broken and small. “Please, I just need a minute Hannibal.”

“Of course Will. Get cleaned up and when you are ready I will be in the study.” He raised his hand and despite the wince that crossed Will’s face he still cupped the man’s cheek for just a moment, and then headed out of the bathroom to give the man his privacy.

It was a shorter wait than he expected before Will showed up at the door to the study, face red and blotchy from crying, wringing his hands in the bottom of his shirt, chest rising and falling too fast like he was on the edge of hyperventilating.

“Will?”

“I… I cleaned up. I just… it can’t be true, Hannibal.”

Hannibal stood and closed the distance between them quickly, pleased when Will didn’t flinch or pull away when he reached out to grab him and pull him close. Immediately Will’s face pressed against his chest, grabbing on to his shirt, clinging to him. There were a few more tears but eventually he settled, huffing small breaths of hot air against Hannibal’s chest and his voice was resigned, “I am an omega, aren’t I?”

“Yes.” He pressed his fingers through Will’s hair, stroking as he held him close, pressing his face against Will’s neck to breath in the omega scent there and spoke with quiet calm. “You are.” There were sniffles against his chest and he pressed the side of his face against his curls, “Don’t worry Will, you’re okay. I will take care of you. Everything will be okay, I promise.”

A breathy ‘thank you Hannibal’ came from the other man as he settled into the embrace, and Hannibal held him tighter as he revelled in his victory.

Chapter End Notes

Well.

Chapter 9

Will was in shock, or something similar, and spent most of the afternoon curled up on the couch in the den. He'd respond to Hannibal if he talked to him, but other than that he kept his knees pulled up and his face buried against them.

It was progress over denying though, and Hannibal was proud of him for doing so well despite how upset he was. It was nearly time for him to start dinner and he made his way into the den, carefully sitting on the couch next to him. Will's head lifted to look at him, eyes wide and a little panicked but lucid. He gave him a soft grin. "I'm going to start dinner. I just wanted to let you know I'm going to send an update to Jack."

That got his attention and Will lowered his legs to the floor, eyebrows pulled together like he was unsure, but he muttered, "I'll call him."

Hannibal kept himself from tensing, but just barely. He had been lulled by Will doing exactly what he wanted, responding just as he hoped, and he took a moment to answer. "It's really no bother, Will. You relax."

Will was shaking his head though, looking around and blinking wide eyes too much like he was just coming back to himself. He rubbed the back of his neck, "I appreciate that, but I'll call him. He's probably chomping at the bit to yell at me anyways." When Hannibal didn't say anything Will's gaze moved to him, not meeting his eyes, looking somewhere around his chin. His voice lowered a little, "If… if that's okay."

The deference went a long way to calming him. "Of course, Will. If you need any anything just let me know."

Will gave him a small smile even though it was wilted around the edges and Hannibal headed towards the kitchen before his control gave. The thought that Will wanted to talk to another alpha, it rankled him, but he pushed it down. He was being unreasonable, he knew that. Let Will talk to Jack, better Jack hear it from him anyways.

Will held the phone in his hand, chewing on his lip, as he glanced towards the kitchen for the millionth time and wondered if he should just let Hannibal contact Jack. He knew the man was going to be loud, and aggressive and hadn't he already asked Hannibal to help him?

He groaned and rubbed his face against his shoulder, but took a deep breath and clicked on Jack's name. He hadn't even processed what was happening himself, and wasn't ready to be attacked about it, but he refused to be cowed.

He put the phone to his ear and listened to it ring.

Even though it was Sunday it was picked up before the first ring ended. " *Will* ?"

“Hey Jack.” His stomach clenched and he didn’t know why he had insisted on calling Jack himself.

“ *Is everything okay?”*

If anything he should have had Hannibal call so he didn’t have to go through the humiliation of listening to Jack say I told you so. He realized he’d been silent too long and tucked the phone closer to his mouth. “Yeah. I mean, no. I don’t know.”

There was a sigh on the other side of the phone. “ *I’m happy to hear from you Will, we’ve been worried about you. I know you don’t want to see-”*

He clenched down hard to keep the whimper from making it out of his mouth. It was too soon, he couldn’t force the words out of his mouth. “Jack.” His voice broke when he said it and he closed his eyes. “I… I’m convinced I’m an omega, we don't need to discuss the tests. I don’t know how and I don’t remember *anything* about it, but…”

“ *Will, we will figure it out. You are not going through this alone* .”

Jack sounded so smug despite the supportive words and Will felt sick. “We can talk monday, goodbye Jack.”

He didn’t wait for an answer before he hung up, sure that he would hear more about it Monday. But he would have Hannibal with him then, and that made it less stressful. He dropped his phone in his pocket and rubbed his hands over his face, heading quietly towards the kitchen. He had the vague idea that Hannibal was unhappy that he hadn’t let him deal with it, and he hadn't known why, but maybe he had just known that Will wasn’t up to it yet.

Just inside the kitchen his phone went off, vibrating in his pocket and he cringed, pulling it out to look at Jack’s name flashing across the screen. He shoved it back into his pocket and finally worked up the nerve to look at Hannibal.

The man was giving him a gentle smile and Will moved closer to him, pulling out the phone to set it on the counter as it started to go off again. “I hung up on Jack.”

“For any particular reason?”

He looked at the phone as it stopped ringing, and almost immediately Hannibal’s rang. Hannibal looked at it but made no move towards it as he waited for Will’s answer. He was ashamed and nudged at his phone, “I told him and I just didn’t know what else to say.”

“Do you want me to answer my phone and talk with him?” Will didn’t answer and Hannibal finally hit the ignore button on his phone, setting it next to Will’s on the counter. “We can speak with Jack tomorrow.”

Will nodded, thankful for the reprieve, and tilted his head, “Is there anything I can do to help?”

“If you could set the table, I would appreciate that.”

“Sure.”

Hannibal watched Will putter around the room, debating where silverware was supposed to go with a furrowed brow, and grinned down at their phones. He’d have to call Jack later, the man would expect it, but right now Will had all his attention.

The conversation during dinner was calm, relaxed. Will expected Hannibal to bring up his status, what was going to happen now, but he avoided the entire topic.

When the food was gone, Will helped Hannibal clean up, and then wasn’t sure what he was supposed to do. Hannibal ushered him gently into the other room and he sunk into the seat he was directed at, swallowing hard, wondering what was going to happen.

“There is no need for such anxiety, Will. I thought perhaps you would want to discuss a few things before you meet with Jack tomorrow.”

“We meet with him, right?”

Hannibal busied himself with pouring Will a glass of whiskey to hide his smile. “Of course.” He handed Will the drink and sat across from him with his own drink.

Will smelled the whiskey and chuckled, “This bottle probably cost more than my car.” He swirled it before taking a sip and his eyes lifted from it to Hannibal. “Discuss what?”

Hannibal contemplated his drink. “I’m sure Jack already has some ideas of how this will be handled. Before we hear those, I’d like to know how you’d like to handle them.”

Will nodded. “I want to stay at my house. With my dogs. I know…” The words were bitter and it was difficult not to choke on them, “I know unmated omegas aren’t supposed to live alone, or it is frowned on, but I’ve lived there for years and I’ve managed just fine. I’m not helpless, I can take care of myself.”

“I see no reason why you can’t stay in your home, Will. There would be some stipulations per the wellness laws, check ins, but I agree with you. You are more than capable, being an omega doesn’t change that.”

Will had leaned forward, eyes wide and hopeful, “Really?”

“It is my opinion, Will. I can’t promise you what Jack will think.”

Will scowled, looking down at his lap, and didn’t touch on that. “Will I still get to teach?”

“Of course. I think it is a good profession for you Will, you enjoy it. You are good at it.”

That made him smile even though he didn’t look up, “And what about working cases?”

Hannibal leaned back in his chair, taking a sip of his drink. The silence made Will lift his head up, and he wouldn’t lie to him. Not exactly. “I think working with Jack and these cases

is detrimental to your mental health."

It had been going so well it was clear Will was caught off guard, slumping into his chair with a scowl on his face. "I save lives."

"We've had this discussion Will, and I think it is even more pertinent now." He waited just long enough for the anger to start to settle before he added, "If it is important to you, I fully believe you deserve your autonomy Will-"

"With some stipulations, yeah?" Hannibal tilted his head down in silent agreement. He carefully tried to calm Will, just enough to bring his tension down and he watched Will roll his shoulders, frown easing. "Stop doing that."

"I am just trying to help, Will." He set down his drink. "I will be honest with you. I think you don't understand what it will mean to be an omega. What happened at the doctor's office will happen again. I do not think you are prepared to handle it in a healthy way."

"So what? Should I just find an alpha to go ankles up in their bed, and call it a day?" The pitch of Will's voice spiked, frantic, and Hannibal moved to his feet. Will flinched back against his chair but Hannibal crouched in front of him, reaching out to cup his face. The man struggled against the hold, didn't want to meet his eyes, but finally he gave in.

Once Hannibal was sure he had his attention he spoke low, "No, Will. I am suggesting you take things slowly and let me help you. That you accept that some things may not be possible, or simply may not be as easy."

Will jerked away and Hannibal let him, settling back on his heels. Will downed the rest of his drink in one gulp, crossing his arms over his chest. "Give me some space." He nodded, rolling to his feet and reached for Will's glass to fill it again. He handed it to Will, fingers brushing against his hand, pleased at the shiver it caused. Will didn't drink it, just stared at it, before he spoke. "What time are we meeting Jack tomorrow?"

"10am."

Will nodded and muttered, "I'm sorry. I know you are going out of your way to help me, I'm still not sure how you got dragged into this."

He chuckled, "I assure you Will, I am here because I want to help a friend." Will pulled off his glasses, rubbing his face, and even though there was more that should be discussed Hannibal was familiar with the signs of Will when he was overwhelmed. It had been enough for now.

"I'm going to retire for the night, Will. Please, make yourself comfortable, you know where I am if you need anything. I will see you in the morning."

Will barely nodded his acknowledgement, staring at his drink and lost in thought. Hannibal watched him for a moment before he headed back to the kitchen to pick up his phone. He really should give Jack that call.

Will had declined any food for breakfast and Hannibal hadn't pushed, aware that the man was anxious, though the several cups of coffee probably didn't help that. It was certainly something that he would have to work on.

He hadn't told Will that he called Jack, he had a fairly good idea what to expect and he was curious to see how Will would handle it. As it was Will was uncomfortable, fidgeting in his seat, nerves making his scent strong and cloying like it was begging an Alpha to take care of him. Hannibal wondered if it would sway Jack.

Next to him Will was muttering to himself, looking at his hands, and though he couldn't quite make out the words he knew Will was practicing what he would say to Jack, trying to prepare himself to face him. That was a curious thought. "Do you always prepare for discussions with Jack in this way?"

Will's eyes darted up to him, startled, and Hannibal wondered if he hadn't realized he was doing it out loud. A blush moved up his face as he whipped his head to look out the window, muttering, "I just like to be ready."

"Jack is your friend, isn't he?"

"Doesn't mean you don't still have to be ready."

Everything about Will was screaming out for someone to take care of him, to guide him, it was practically a physical thing the man touted around with him. He nodded, sure that Will would see it, "I believe that you feel that way, Will. With Jack I think it is not an unwise choice."

Will scoffed, and crossed his arms, still looking out the window. "But not with you, right? That is what you're implying?"

"Do you practice your conversations with me as well, then?"

He kept his eyes on the road but still saw Will turn his head to look at him before he looked back out the window. "No."

Hannibal parked next to Will's car when they arrived, the man's eyes lighting up as they landed on it and he dragged fingers across it when he got out. "I get to go home today, right?"

"Again, that is my opinion. Depending on Jack and what you decide it could change."

"Jack listens to you." There was a bitter note in the words, almost a jealousy, and it reminded Hannibal that even when Will was a beta Jack had treated him like he was something that he owned. He didn't like it.

They were nearly to the door when Will froze, momentum just suddenly stumbling to a stop, and he wasn't sure what happened. Will's eyes were too wide, panicked, and then the man was retreating back towards the vehicles. For a moment Hannibal thought he might jump in

his car and take off but he went to Hannibal's, tugging at the handle, face even more distressed when it didn't open. Hannibal clicked the button to unlock it, and could see the relief on Will's face as he practically dove into the car, huddling in the seat.

He slowly made his way back, glancing once at the building, before pulling open the door to sit in the driver's seat. Will was shaking his head hard, chewing at his thumb nail, his eyes glazed over in panic.

"Will?"

"I don't think I can go in there." Hannibal didn't say anything, just moved slightly closer to Will and watched the man lean into him. He swallowed hard a few times before he spoke, "It was suddenly just real, ya know? I'm going to go in there an everyone is going to *know* . It didn't seem so final sitting at your house talking over whiskey. Like I would still get to be a real person instead of… instead of…"

"You are still yourself, Will."

Will's eyes darted up at the building, "He's gonna roll right over me, Hannibal."

"Jack can be reasonable and he is your friend. Yes, people will know, but that is okay. You don't have to pretend to be something you aren't anymore, change is difficult but you are adaptable."

"I wasn't pretending though Hannibal. I can only remember being a beta. That's… why can't I remember?"

"If you are not up to this yet that is understandable Will. I can call Jack and reschedule."

"No. We're here. Let's just get it over with. Like you said, everyone is going to know anyways. What does it matter what I want."

His tone had taken a turn into a self pitying desolation that had Hannibal fighting a snarl, he expected better from Will. "If it doesn't matter to you, you can't expect it to matter to Jack. It seemed to matter, when you spoke of your dogs and your job. Are you so willing to give that up?"

"No."

"Then it matters Will."

He didn't wait for an answer as he got out of the car, striding towards the building with sure steps, barely tilting his head to acknowledge when Will fell into step next to him. He still slowed at the entrance but he didn't stop, and that was more like it.

Jack was already in his office, standing in the hallway chatting with a few agents, and Hannibal reached out to gently set a hand against the small of Will's back as they moved through the doorway, keeping him steady when Jack shut the door.

Jack wasn't discreet about the way he scented the air, and his eyes widened slightly at how clear Will's scent was. Since he had triggered his internal omega gland the scent had become less muddled, and Hannibal secretly hoped it was because his system was taking over instead of the pills providing the stimulant to create phereomones.

"You look good, Will. Why don't you take a seat? How are you feeling?" Jack had always treated Will like he was fragile but his voice was even more gentle, close to condescending and Will bristled as he slid into the chair.

"Feeling great, Jack." HIs name was snapped out, impossible to miss the hostility.

The man gave him a sad smile, turning his attention to Hannibal, "Still adjusting I see. Has he remembered anything?"

"I'm right here Jack."

He turned his attention to Will, sighing like he was greatly put upon. "Of course. Have you remembered anything?"

Will's jaw clenched and he stared at the table. "No."

Jack scowled like he didn't believe that, "Nothing about lying to the bureau for years, then? Not exactly the answer I was hoping for, it doesn't speak well to your stability, does it?"

Will's shoulders hunched, "I'm trying to remember, Jack." He tried to take a few deep breaths, he didn't want to fight with Jack, but he felt attacked.

"Please try to calm down Will."

Will's lip curled at the words and he was working on what he was going to say in response when he was suddenly drowning in that alpha sense, Jack trying to calm him, and unlike Hannibal's this made him feel like he was drowning. He did start to calm, but like he was being drugged, sluggish and hard to fight against and a small whine made it out of his throat.

"Jack." Hannibal's voice was sharp, scolding, even as he reached out to wrap his fingers around Will's wrist, using his touch to ground him. "He does not want you to calm him like that, Jack. Please stop."

As soon as Hannibal touched him it had cleared his mind, leaving panic and anger in it's wake. He twisted in his chair, curling in a bit, moving closer to Hannibal. Jack stopped, leaning back in his chair, and he looked surprised. "I was just trying to calm him."

Will felt violated, glaring at Jack, adrenaline spiked. "Don't do that again."

It was uncomfortable in the room and Hannibal cleared his throat, making sure he was calm, "Perhaps we should discuss the reason for this meeting."

"Yeah, sure." Jack shifted in his seat and looked down at the paperwork in front of me. "It should all be straight forward, Will."

Will leaned forward uneasily, shooting a quick glance at Hannibal, and tried to pull himself together. "About working cases?"

"That is part of it. I have the paperwork here for Agent Thornton to be assigned as your long term Alpha handler. He lives near you and it could be arranged that he would conduct check ups on you in your home, though, preferably, he has the extra space that you could stay with him. He reports directly to me, so you don't have to worry about a stranger handling you. I will be able to monitor while you are working cases. I just will need you to sign the paperwork."

Silence settled over them and Will felt frozen in place. He stared at Jack and tried to put words together, "Hannibal is my handler."

Jack shrugged, "On short notice he was gracious enough to help, but I didn't think he planned on it long term. I picked out agent Thornton myself."

Hannibal wasn't really surprised that Jack was using this to his advantage. He had been given the opportunity to essentially being able to control Will's life and his involvement and the man had jumped at it. He was sure if Jack wasn't already bonded he would have put himself as Will's handler and that thought was enough to make him growl.

Jack's head jerked to him, frowning. "I'm trying to do what is best for Will."

"Hannibal." Will hated the way his voice came out, scared. Needy.

"I am happy to stay as his handler Jack. Will and I have discussed what it would look like going forward. For the time being I think it is in his best interested to be able to lean on an Alpha he knows and trusts. If he wishes to change his mind in the future when things are more settled he can make that decision."

Jack looked floored, like he had expected to get his way, and without Hannibal there he probably would have. Will was right, the man would have rolled him. "I understand what you are saying, but I'm going to have to insist. If Will would like to continue to work with the bureau, this is the way it has to be."

Hannibal looked to Will, trying to gauge what he was thinking. He refused to let Will be managed by another Alpha, couldn't stand the thought that they might *touch* him, and if it happened he knew who would end up on his table next. He didn't think it would come to that though. Will's fingers wrapped in the bottom of his shirt and his voice was quiet, but didn't waver, "I don't *have* to work for you Jack. And I do not have to give up my life to work for you."

Pride welled up in Hannibal's chest, pleased that Will didn't give in to Jack, that he didn't defer to just any alpha the way he did to Hannibal.

"I'm not asking, Will. If you want to stay in your house, continue the way things are Will, this is what you have to do."

“I know my rights, Jack. I can live on my own if I want, I can *do* what I want. Hannibal is my handler, *not you* . You can’t dictate what I do.”

Jack growled, the anger leeching into the air around them, and Will bit his lip to keep himself from cowering. Hannibal stood at that, moving between Will and Jack, not stopping his own growl. “I think that is enough for today, Jack. He has made his decision.”

“I want to go.” Will was on his feet and out the door before either of them could respond, leaving just Jack and Hannibal standing off with each other.

Jack had stopped growling, but he didn’t look any less happy, “I thought we were on the same side, Doctor Lecter.”

He gave him a cold grin and nodded. “We are, though I was under the impression that was Will’s side. If we are finished here.”

“I’ll be in touch, once Will has settled down.”

Hannibal didn’t answer him, heading out of the office, scanning the hallway for Will. He hadnt gone too far, eyes landing on Hannibal with something like relief and Hannibal gave him reassuring smile.

“Well?”

“Jack is satisfied with the way things are, for now. He said he will be in touch if you wish you discuss it at a later date. Which will be up to you, Will.”

He rubbed the back of his neck, chewing his lip, unsure. He wanted to work for the FBI, but not like that. When he was practically passed off like the title on a car. “I’d really just like to go home.”

“Of course.”

They walked to the parking lot and Hannibal saw him off, making sure that he had a supply of “suppresants”, amused that until he was actually driving away Will looked like it was a trick. He had no problem letting Will go home to his dogs and settle in, the meeting with Jack had proved everything that he had hoped. Will had chosen him, and Jack knew it. At the very least the rift between them should keep the issue of Will working any cases on the back burner for awhile. It really was no work for the man, and he’d be an irresponsible Alpha to let his omega put himself in such danger.

Some of the laws concerning Omegas were outdated in his opinion, but would be useful. He would give him a few days to calm down, to think about things, and then they would discuss where they went from here.

Chapter 10

Will's only thoughts were on getting home. Back to his territory, his den. Somewhere that he could be alone and process everything without any outside influence.

The drive home gave him time to think, he knew that Jack wouldn't leave it like that, he may have backed down now but it wouldn't last. He was certain that Hannibal would keep the other man at bay though, and he had no idea what gave him that much confidence.

Hannibal was its own problem. The man was kind, gentle, and had gone more than out of his way so far, and Will didn't know what to do about it. Part of him wanted to run, to hide even though he felt a small ache, like he was missing something, something that only calmed when he was around Hannibal. Maybe it had been the omega part of him always reacting to the Alpha, though, even now, even with all the proof, a small part of him still resisted.

Not enough for him to be stupid about it. It was clearly just denial, and he wouldn't be difficult and keep pushing the thought just because it made him feel better. At the back of his mind he couldn't forget that if he kept insisting, there was always the threat of being committed, because if he wouldn't accept the truth right in front of him where did that leave him.

His jaw ached by the time he got home from clenching his jaw, from trying really hard not to think about anything. In the car, by himself for the first time really since this had been brought to light, he was distracted by his own scent.

He had smelled omegas before, in passing. They smelled good, sweet, but Will had never had much interest in them, the little contact he had. And he expected his own omega scent to smell strange to him, like a fragrance *on* him, but it didn't. It smelled like him and he couldn't even remember how he had smelled before. It gave him a headache to think about it. Or added to his headache, anyways.

Just like Alphas had never smelled particularly interesting to him, but just remembering the way Hannibal smelled and a pull of attraction settled into his stomach, making him shift his weight as he flushed. Definitely not the reaction he'd ever had before.

Maybe he could get scent blockers. He already had heat suppressants from Hannibal, and knew it would be next to impossible to get actual suppressants even though apparently he had been getting them before. Maybe he had a source. But scent blockers kind of worked and they were over the counter and at least it was something he could do. Something he could use to take back a little of his control.

But first he'd hide away with his dogs for a day or two, and deny the outside world existed. That sounded like a great plan.

For two days he didn't leave his house. There were a few texts from Hannibal, just asking him if he was okay and if he needed anything and Will had responded with short one word answers, unable to completely ignore them even though he kind of wanted to, but that seemed enough to satisfy the man. He knew he couldn't put it off forever, but was grateful he was being given a few days to himself.

Will had slept in Wednesday morning, curled up with his dogs, rare for him but he finally forced himself out of bed and made coffee, telling himself he would go to the store once he woke up more. Somewhere in his gut he felt like something was wrong and it was almost gratifying to have it confirmed when there was a knock on his door.

Will closed his eyes, staring at his cup of coffee. He had heard the car pull up, could recognize the roll of it up his driveway, if only out of self preservation because it never meant anything good for him. Now that he was at the door he could smell the alpha, could tell that he was upset, and the annoyance he felt when Jack invaded his personal space was intertwined with something darker now, unable to stop the spike of wariness. Of anxiety.

Another knock and he pushed to his feet, still hesitant, but moved to the door. He unlocked it and opened it just enough to look at Jack, "What do you want?"

"I just want to talk." Will raised an eyebrow and Jack let out a long slow breath, "Can I come in Will?"

He thought about making a show of possibly refusing but they both knew he would let him in. He eased back and opened the door, but stopped before it was enough for him to come in. His voice wavered, "If you try to calm me Jack, if you use any alpha force, I'll… I will report you."

Jack had been in the process of rolling his eyes but as Will spoke it was impossible to miss the real fear in the words. If Jack pushed he would give, he wouldn't be *able* to do anything else, and it terrified him.

Jack's stance eased, the look on his face softening. "I won't Will, I promise." Will still didn't move and Jack spoke again, voice gentle, "I wouldn't hurt you, Will."

He scoffed at that but he moved out of the doorway, letting him in. "You want a cup of coffee?"

"Sure."

Will nodded, and it gave him something to do. Even not doing anything Jack was always too much in his house, his presence too overwhelming. Will glanced at the way his dogs had gone, they weren't fond of him either, and wished he could follow.

He set a cup of coffee down and sat on the other side of the table, avoiding looking directly at the man. "So what do you want, Jack?" Before the man could continue he added, "I'm not changing Hannibal as my Handler."

“I know. I’m not asking you too. This came as a surprise to all of us, Will, and maybe I didn’t handle it as I should have.” Another scoff from Will that would have normally pissed the other man off but he stayed calm, “I want you to keep working on cases. We’ve never had an omega profiler, there is no precedent for it.”

“You threatened to take away my house, my dogs, *everything* because I wouldn’t do what you wanted Jack. Like… 2 days ago.”

“I didn’t-”

“ *You did* .” He was uncomfortable and he leaned back. He wished Hannibal was there.

A growl slipped out of Jack’s throat and Will was on his feet before he realized it, a whine building in his throat that he couldn’t stop at the threat. The growl abruptly ended, and Jack looked genuinely contrite. He rubbed a hand over his face, “Please sit down Will, I didn’t mean to startle you. I keep forgetting it is different now, you’ve never cared when I growled before.”

“Maybe you should leave.”

Jack didn't move, not that he expected him to. “I’d like you to still work on cases Will, if you think you are up to it. I don’t want to push you.”

“I’ll talk with Hannibal about it.”

“Why?”

“What?”

“Why do you need to talk with Hannibal?”

Will hesitated, “He’s my alpha.” He expected the words to feel weird on his tongue, but they felt right. Comforting as he realized he could wield them as a defense against Jack. He didn’t miss the annoyance on Jack’s face and he chewed his lip. He kept his eyes on the table, “It’s a lot for *me* to process Jack. You keep talking about how thrown you are, but I have no idea what is happening, or what to do. Does that sound to you like I should be in the field?”

“No.” Jack shook his head, and though it was the answer that Will wanted there was something in his voice that made him roll his shoulders uncomfortably. He wanted Jack to understand that he couldn’t handle it, but Jack actually agreeing that he couldn’t handle it was a different story. It made him feel broken and weak.

His eyes caught his phone and something clenched in his stomach and he glanced up at Jack, “Did you tell Hannibal that you were coming here?”

“No.”

The something in his stomach more clearly was panic, he could remember the disapproval when he had pushed to call Jack himself and he knew that Hannibal would be unhappy that

he was there. That he was talking to Jack without him and he felt his fingers twitch, reaching for the phone. "You should have told him."

Jack reached out to stop him from picking up the phone and he was shaky and couldn't tell anymore if the concern on his face was real or not. "Your scent just spiked Will, are you afraid of Hannibal?" Will scowled and Jack amended his question, "Are you not allowed to talk to me?"

"I'm allowed to do whatever I want."

"You are suddenly very distressed." Jack leaned back, eyes searching, "Am I overstepping with someone's omega?"

Will shook his head, "I'm not, I don't belong to anyone Jack. I'm a person, not a possession. He'll want to know, though." He pulled his hand away from where Jack had stopped it and picked up the phone.

"I'm leaving anyways, Will. I just wanted to check on you, to talk to you." He reached out like he was going to touch again but instead shook his head and moved to his feet. "If you need anything, call me Will. Hannibal might be your Handler, but you have plenty of friends."

He didn't walk him to the door, he only crossed his arms and stared out the window and waited until the door closed and the sound of gravel faded before he picked up the phone. He shied away from calling, knew in his gut that he didn't do anything wrong but it felt like he had. So instead he sent a text, just letting him know that Jack had stopped by.

The phone was barely set down when it started ringing and he couldn't help it as his shoulders hunched. He rolled his eyes, disgusted with himself, and picked up the phone.

"Hello."

"Is he still there?"

Hannibal's voice was calm, but the lack of greeting stood out to him, it was a rare rudeness he didn't usually see from the man. He swallowed and it sounded loud to his own ears, and he wondered if Hannibal could hear it over the phone. "No. He's gone." His voice was barely a whine and he winced at it.

There was a pause before Hannibal spoke again, " *Are you okay Will?"*

"Yeah. I just… I'm sorry?" He didn't even know what he was apologizing for.

A longer pause. " *I'd like to talk to Jack about respecting boundaries with you Will. Do you have a problem with that?"*

He shook his head, belatedly realizing that Hannibal couldn't see him. "That's fine. I told him that I didn't think I should be in the field right now and he… I think he agreed." He rubbed the back of his neck, "I must be a mess if even Jack thinks it."

“ *You’re not a mess, Will.* ” The tone was affectionate, and if Hannibal was angry about Jack he couldn’t hear it. “ *We have our normal session tomorrow, we can talk then. Unless you need to talk sooner.”*

“Tomorrow is fine.” He was overthinking it. “I just thought you should know. About Jack.”

“ *You did very good Will, you stood your ground. I must get back to my patient. Call me if you need anything.”*

Will mumbled a goodbye and hung up, letting out a long sigh. It wasn’t the way he wanted to start the day.

The store shouldn’t be daunting, but it was. Will sat in his car where it felt nice and safe, and reminded himself that no one would care if he was an omega. It wasn’t unheard of for one to be out on their own, though it was treated a bit like a child out on their own, and that thought was enough to raise his hackles.

No one would say anything, or do anything, he was working himself up for nothing. He’d go in, get some cans of soup to tide him over, look for scent blockers and then he’d go back home.

He dropped his forehead to the steering wheel, it wasn’t like he had handled being out in public that great before. With a grunt he forced himself to move, shoving open the door with more force than necessary, nearly knocking it into someone walking past his car. Face red he mumbled an apology, dropping his eyes as he shut the door. The man watched him for a moment but Will skirted around him, moving quickly towards the building, avoiding a conflict. He thought the man had scented him, but it was probably just in his head.

The man had been a beta, and Will had never made a point to scent people in public before, and he didn’t know if the reflex now was more about his anxiety or being omega.

His head ducked he grabbed a hand basket, glancing up only long enough to find the pharmacy section and headed that way. Once he was there he realized he didn’t know where to look, he had never needed to look for anything dynamic related. He hovered down the aisles, but after two full trips he still hadn’t found what he was looking for. He was on his third trip down the aisle when his way was blocked.

Just from the body position it wasn’t an accident, it was someone intentionally moving into his space and he stumbled back a step before he looked up just enough to identify it as a man, his nose telling him it was an alpha, and his body tensed violently enough that he almost dropped the basket.

The reaction made the man take a step back, hands coming up, voice gentle, “Hey there, it’s okay. You looked like you needed help finding something.”

Another quick glance and Will saw a name tag for the store, saw a friendly face, and he clutched the basket to him, overwhelmed. Embarrassed.

The man's voice was still friendly, but it had lowered, a patronizing tilt to it, "It's okay little thing, I didn't mean to scare you. Where is your Alpha?"

Will bared his teeth, basket raised more between them like a barrier until he could hide behind it, but didn't know what to say. He wanted to say not to call him that, he wanted to say he didn't have an alpha, he wanted the man to just ask him if he needed help finding something like he would anyone else. He was still baring his teeth but it was a whine and not a growl that made it out. He *hated* this.

The employee looked mildly concerned, glancing around before he settled his eyes back on Will with understanding. "Ah, no alpha." If he tried to calm him Will was certain he was going to attack him, was going to do something drastic, but the man just reached out to grab the basket and push it down so he could see Will properly. "Can I help you find something?"

He couldn't keep baring his teeth at the man, not in public, not when he was being kind and it took a few seconds but he forced himself to calm, licking his lips before he glanced at the shelf. "Scent blockers." He felt like he should explain his behavior and he scuffed his foot, "I'm just off suppressants after uh… after a long time."

"Sure. Over here." The man led him to a section of shelf, next to the condoms and lube, which made his flush renew itself. "Anything else you need help with?"

He shook his head, mumbling out a thank you, and could feel the man's eyes on him for a moment longer before he moved on. He shook his head, angry with himself. If he had just stayed calm and acted like a normal person it would have gone fine, he knew it was his reaction that had started it. His fear.

Self consciously he looked at the shelf, wrinkling his nose at what he saw. He didn't want to stick around and read them but he picked up one and looked at it, read the back and sighed. None of them looked like they would do any good, like they were novelties, but he knew anything stronger needed a prescription. And he probably wasn't going to get that. Finally he picked one that looked the least offensive and shoved it into his basket before he headed towards the other side of the store, though he could still feel eyes on him.

Not looking, not meeting anyones eyes, was already a practiced talent. He grabbed enough food for a few days, maybe a bit more because he really didn't want to have to come back, and headed towards the front check out. He kept his eyes on his basket, on pulling his wallet out, but he could *feel* eyes watching him.

He paid for his groceries, settling when the cashier didn't hesitate or react at scanning the scent blockers, and thanked her as he took the bag. Out of the corner of his eye he could see the man from the aisle moving towards the door to leave at the same pace he was, and he swallowed hard and told himself it was a coincidence.

They reached the door at the same time and the man made a sound like he was surprised, though Will didn't believe it for a moment. "Oh hey, I was just going on break. Want me to walk you to your car?"

“I’m fine.” Will didn’t know how to handle the attention, it wasn’t like he had ever had that many people ever interested in him.

“I don’t mind.” The bags in his hands were grabbed and he was too surprised to react, letting them be pulled from his fingers. “Come on, where are you parked.”

Will looked up until he met the man’s eyes, impossible not to smell the Alpha and he did smell good. It made him uncomfortable. He realized arguing with him would make a scene so he ducked his head and nodded, making an awkward motion towards his car.

Halfway to his car Will was hopeful that maybe the man was just honestly being helpful, he wasn’t trying to touch him or push into his space, and he tried to relax. It must have been a sign, though.

“So I’m not normally so forward, but I haven’t seen you around here. I think I would’ve noticed an omega as pretty as you. Did you just move here?”

There was a lilt of flirtation in the voice and Will’s throat closed up, stopping his words for long seconds. Finally he shook his head, “No, I just don’t get out much.”

“Would you want to get a coffee sometime maybe?”

They reached his car and he grabbed at his bags, relieved when the man let him without any trouble. “No, thank you.”

“Okay, figured I’d ask. My name is Theo, just in case you change your mind.” With just a smile the man was heading back to the store and Will let out a long breath. Again, he knew he had overreacted. The man hadn’t overstepped, hadn’t pushed, but just the thought of being pursued was enough to send him into panic.

It was hard not to cry once he was sitting in his car. He was overwhelmed and frustrated and he scrubbed at his face when it sunk in that this was his life now. His rights, his choices, were dwindling and he felt like he was lost. He needed his paddle, he needed to be grounded. He needed Hannibal.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will gave into tears, just for a minute, before he finally calmed down enough to slide the key in the ignition and shouted in surprise when his phone rang. He was just glad he hadn't already put it in drive, he probably would have crashed. He had to calm down. He wanted to ignore it but he could see Hannibal's name flash across the screen and he scrambled to pick it up.

"Hannibal?"

"Hello - Will? Are you okay?"

He realized he had cut off his greeting, and his voice was still rough from crying. Of course Hannibal would pick up on it right away. He rubbed at his face, cheeks still wet. "I was just grocery shopping. Sorry. Hello."

"Did something happen?"

"No, just stress. I didn't expect to hear from you so soon."

"Ah yes." There was the sound of Hannibal taking a breath on the other side of the phone and Will felt his heart race, sure that nothing good was going to bed said. "I would rather talk in person if that is possible, Will."

That didn't help his anxiety at all. "Just tell me." There was a pang in his chest at that, that he was being short with an alpha, but he ignored it. "I can come talk after I drop off my groceries if you want, but just tell me about what."

Another sigh, but he wouldn't give in. "I received back your test results from the brain scan, there appears to be a problem. The doctor believes it is encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain due to an infection. Right now it is very early on and treatable, we just need to address it immediately."

It hadn't been what he expected. He found himself speechless, unsure what to say, and clutched the phone to his ear. Hannibal was clearly waiting and he muttered, "What?"

"This is why I had hoped to speak in person Will. You do need to go to the hospital. If you want I can meet you there to avoid any issues you might run into being an omega. Or you can come here first and I can bring you."

"Encephalitis?" He felt like his brain was on pause. "What does it do?"

"In its late stages it can cause hallucinations, seizures. It is still early in and may be causing weakness, headaches, some confusion. Fever. You did feel warm, but I assumed it was your body adjusting to being off suppressants."

Will still hadn't caught up but he did realize something. "Why didn't it show up in the other tests that I did. The ones before?"

"It may have been too early to notice." There was another pause and Hannibal still sounded patient but there was a gentle urgency in the words. "The sooner you are treated the better Will. If it gets worse it can be life threatening."

"I'll come to you." He didn't know why he chose that instead of meeting at the hospital. But the grocery shopping was fresh in his mind, the way the doctor had handled him over the weekend, and if it was as serious as Hannibal said he didn't want to have to deal with that. He wanted Hannibal to take care of it.

"That's a good boy, Will. Please drive safe and when you arrive at the office we will go to the hospital. You may have to stay a few days."

"Should I… should you call Jack?"

Hannibal could feel his lip curl, but was pleased with the change in wording. It would seem suspicious if something this important happened with Will and he didn't notify him. "Of course, I will call him while I wait. I am going to request he not come to the hospital as I'm sure he will want to, less stress that way."

"Yeah, sure." He was already trying to figure out what he needed, what to do with his dogs. That pang again and he added, "Thank you Hannibal. I will see you soon."

"See you soon."

Will hung up the phone, setting it down in the passenger seat before he looked back up. He caught a glance of Theo leaning against the side of the building smoking a cigarette, watching him, and he wondered if the man had watched him the entire time he had his break down. Face flushed as red as it could go he added finding a new grocery store to his mental list of things to do.

Hannibal was waiting for him, reassuring smile on his face, and it immediately helped him relax. He had a bag over his shoulder, if he ended up having to stay overnight at the hospital he wanted his things. He didn't protest when Hannibal took the bag from him and he found himself wanting to press closer to him. Just a few days away from him and he had missed him, but he pushed those urges down, the omega instincts were just new to him, or at least felt new.

To cover up his nerves he muttered, "Do you want me to drive?"

"Since you may have to stay, it seems it would make more sense if I drove, yes?"

"Oh yeah."

Hannibal was watching him carefully, "Are you okay Will? Are you sure nothing happened at the grocery store?"

He let out a nervous laugh, feeling a bit ridiculous. "A worker there - an alpha - just had to help me look for something and asked me out for coffee. He was polite and didn't push when I said no, it was just… I'm not used to that."

For a moment Hannibal debated how to respond to that, a growl building up to think of another alpha trying to court his omega, but it should be expected until he properly claimed him. Will was attractive and fit, and he smelled wonderful, other alphas were going to take notice. He focused on the other part, "He didn't do anything inappropriate?"

"No, he was nice. He probably wouldn't have noticed me if I hadn't pretty much had a panic attack in the store."

"This is still very new Will, it sounds like you handled things well."

"Gee thanks." He rolled his shoulders, aware that he was being rude. "Sorry, I'm used to feeling unstable, I'm just not used to feeling so… vulnerable."

Hannibal's hand came up to catch his jaw, tilting his face up so he could meet his eyes. That was different, Hannibal didn't usually force eye contact. "I'm am here to help you however you need Will. You are not alone, and I know it feels vulnerable to embrace that you are an omega, but once you settle in it will not feel that way. You should feel safe in being who you are and not having to pretend."

Will nodded, gently pulling away, enough that if Hannibal wanted to keep his hold he could but he let go and Will quickly ducked his head, averting his eyes. "Right."

"But we need not talk about this now. I would like to get you to the hospital and begin treatment as soon as possible." Hannibal's hand came up again but he only pressed the back of his hand to his forehead, "Your fever is worse."

With that Hannibal was ushering him out the door with a hand on the small of his back and he let himself be led, leaning into the hand.

It was easier once they reached the hospital than Will had expected. It seemed Hannibal had already called and talked to a doctor he knew, got the tests transferred over, and all he had to do when he arrived was check in. They handed him paperwork to go over, asking him to update any changes and he glanced at it before handing it back without changing anything.

The nurse glanced down at the paperwork and then back up at him, and gave him an empty professional smile. "I'm sorry Mister Graham, you have listed on here that you are a beta. Is that correct?"

He appreciated that he hadn't simply told him that he was an omega, and Will sheepishly took the paperwork back and crossed out 'Beta', writing 'Omega' next to it before he handed it back. The nurse nodded and instructed him to have a seat and he settled into the one next to Hannibal. He leaned towards him, too many people in the room for him to feel comfortable.

“You should be seen soon.” He glanced around the room, checking if anyone was paying Will too much attention and then patted his leg. “Once you are settled and they have begun treatment you will feel steadier.”

Hannibal was right and they didn’t have to wait long. Once they were in a room Will was instructed to change into a hospital gown, Hannibal stepping out to give him privacy, and that seemed a little late for that. He almost would have felt better if Hannibal had stayed. It was just settling in that there was something physically wrong with him, that he was sick, and the worry about that overrode what was happening outside of it.

When the doctor entered the room he greeted Hannibal by name before turning to Will. He couldn’t help the flinch, waiting for the condescension he had received before. “Hello Mister Graham, first I just want to make sure that it is okay to discuss this in front of Dr. Lecter.”

“He’s my alpha handler.”

“I’m aware. It is still your decision if he is here or not, though.”

It was such a refreshing attitude that he found his shoulders relaxing, and nodded. “Yeah, I’d like him to be here.”

“Excellent.”

Will tuned out as the doctor talked after that, it was hard to concentrate, but he knew Hannibal would fill him in on anything he needed to know. He got the basics. It was early in the infection, he would have to be hospitalized for a few days, needed to treat it with antibiotics. He tuned back in as the doctor was saying it was good it was caught so soon.

He gave a wry smile at that and glanced at Hannibal, “I think I have Dr. Lecter to thank for that.”

The doctor gave him a smile as the door opened to a nurse. “If you would Mister Graham, there are just a few tests that we will need to do and then we can get you in a room.”

Will’s eyes darted to Hannibal, “Are you leaving?”

“Of course not, Will. I will see you once you are in your room. I will not be far.”

He gave a quick nod, reassured, and followed the nurse out.

After his departure Hannibal stood, nodding at the doctor, “Thank you. You handled him wonderfully, I appreciate you taking the time to meet with him. He is going through a lot.”

“Of course. Omegas need a special touch, I am happy to help put him at ease. If you’d like I’ll have one of the orderlies show you to his room.”

“That would be appreciated. Thank you.”

It moved quickly after that and Will found himself in a bed with an iv hooked up to his arm, already antsy to get back home to his dogs. There had been a moment of anxiety when they talked about how untreated it could be fatal, but Hannibal had reassured them they caught it quickly and after a few days of downtime he would be fine.

Once it was only the two of them Will shifted, he hated the feeling of the hospital gown. He wanted his clothes. It wasn't what he was concerned about though. "They said they don't know what can cause this but the doctor said… it could be from suppressant abuse?"

Hannibal nodded and looked like he was considering it, "The constant addition of hormones could be a possible cause. You shouldn't blame yourself though, Will. This is a rare occurrence, do not dwell on it."

He couldn't let it go though, and tilted his head. "Could it be part of the reason I don't remember being omega or taking suppressants?"

"I think you should just focus on getting better, Will. Perhaps we will have more answers once you are well." Hannibal patted his leg over the blanket. "Try to rest."

The days in the hospital went by as easy as they could. Jack and Alana came to visit, and Hannibal was by his side nearly the entire time. A small part of him, that never vocalized it, hoped that maybe the entire omega mess was due to the encephalitis, just a mistake but eventually he was cleared and still an omega.

He was released Friday evening. The doctor had gently requested he wait until Saturday but Hannibal had said he'd bring him home and keep an eye on him, and they had relented. He assumed they were going to go back to Hannibal's house even though he was exhausted and just wanted to go home, and was pleasantly surprised when it seemed they were doing just that.

"I get to go home?"

"Yes, if that is okay. I thought after spending last weekend away from home you would prefer your own territory."

"I really would." He glanced at Hannibal and shrugged one shoulder, "No offense." He looked out the window and tried to sound casual, "I can get some good rest this weekend before I go back to classes on Monday." He hated himself for the lilt in his words because he wasn't asking for permission. He wasn't.

He found himself holding his breath though, shoulders tense, and only relaxed when Hannibal made a sound of agreement. "If you are feeling up to it, that should be fine."

"Thank you." The words slipped out and he scowled, crossing his arms across his chest, "And I feel fine."

“Good to hear.” They rode for silence for a bit before Hannibal spoke again. “How were the few days you were home?”

“Okay. I haven’t really… I know I was supposed to think about what we will do going forward with where I can live, or what I can do but mostly I just spent time with my dogs.”

“No rush, Will. Is there anything you need at the store before I bring you home?”

He shook his head, but then thought about it. Most of the meat he had was in the freezer, but there wouldn’t be anything ready to go in his house to make his dog’s food, or for him to eat. He had canned stuff of course but part of him was sure that Hannibal would check if he had food before he left him and be disappointed. He tapped the window, “I could probably use some fresh groceries. Anything I had must have gone bad by now.”

“Is that what you had been getting before I called?”

“No, well some things. But I was looking for scent blockers.” There was suddenly a tension in the car, one that felt like disapproval and he found himself scrambling to explain. “I thought it might help with classes, or just being around others…”

“Those things are atrocious. They don’t block your scent, simply cover it with pine like a car air freshener. Why you would want something so...”

Will’s body curled in tighter the angier Hannibal sounded, hyper aware that his alpha was unhappy with his choice, and he just wanted to placate him. Hannibal was taking such good care of him, helping him so much.

Vaguely he was aware of Hannibal trailing off, unusual for him, and it took long moments for him to realize it was because there was another sound filling the car, and even longer for him to realize he was the one making it. His chest vibrated with the purr, such an instinctual sound meant to appease and soothe his alpha. He hadn’t purred before, wasn’t sure he could. Hell, he didn’t know how he was doing it now.

The sound slowly stopped once he became aware of it, and he fell silent, at a loss for what to say. Hannibal spoke up and the anger was gone from his voice. “It’s okay Will, I’m not upset. I should not have overreacted.” One of Hannibal’s hands reached out to settle on his thigh and it grounded him, made him turn in towards him as much as the seat belt allowed. The relief that his alpha wasn’t angry was immediate, and the whiplash of emotions was almost enough to make him break down again.

Hannibal didn’t acknowledge it, just let him handle it. “We will pick up some groceries and I will make sure you have a few meals for this weekend.”

“You don’t have to do that-’

“I must insist. Now, which store are we going to?” His hands tightened on the wheel, “Perhaps your normal store. Seeing an alpha with you may discourage employees there from being overly friendly in the future.”

It took Will a few seconds to understand what he was saying and when he did he blushed, and let out a startled laugh. “You want to stake your claim?”

“If you’d prefer to have the Alphas there courting you, then so be it.” It was impossible to not notice that his voice was snippy.

He had just calmed Hannibal and he didn’t really want to aggravate him again. “No, I appreciate it.” He quietly gave him the address and then leaned as much into Hannibal’s space as he could. It should make him feel controlled, suffocated, and he wasn’t willing to think too much about how instead it made him feel cared for. Protected.

Will didn’t really want to go back to that store, well aware of how he had looked and a little uncomfortable about what Hannibal might do if confronted with Theo. Hannibal wasn’t his alpha, not really, he was only his handler but Will would be stupid to not realize that even when he had been a beta Hannibal had a certain vibe when it came to him. Lying never crossed his mind though.

They pulled into the parking lot and Will got a little confidence back at the sour look on Hannibal’s face as he eyed the store. Probably not entirely up to his normal standards. He undid his seatbelt, “Something wrong?”

Hannibal only gave him a look and got out of the vehicle, Will following with a grin on his face.

Chapter End Notes

sorry about the delay, i promise i haven't abandoned any stories

a dislocated shoulder, some other injures and straight up depression have been making things a struggle

i will try to do better updating

Chapter 12

In the store Will tried not to startle when a warm hand settled on the small of his back, after the initial surprise it was actually... comforting. Grounding. He rolled his shoulders, aware that he should be a little more put off by the proprietary gesture, but that had been the purpose of choosing this store, hadn't it? So he could shop here without having to worry about any flirting alphas in the future.

He kept his eyes down and let Hannibal lead him around the store, justified it to himself that Hannibal knew more than he did about cooking. Eventually Hannibal's hand left him to look at the groceries, Will dutifully holding the small blue basket when he handed it to him. He watched for a few minutes but was bored, and now that he was up on his feet and moving around he realized how tired he was.

His eyes skimmed across the store and he didn't expect to meet anyones, but there was the Alpha from the other day watching him. He looked friendly, curious, and once he caught Will's eyes he moved towards him.

Will didn't know what to do, and he stumbled back a step, only to come up against a body behind him. He let out a squeak, but Hannibal's hand slid around his waist, steadying him and his voice was calm, "Is that him?"

"It's fine Hannibal."

Keeping his eyes on the ground he pulled away from Hannibal, but stayed close, moving so he was behind him. A quick glance and he could see Theo had stopped moving, eyes on Hannibal, and his face flushed as he busied himself with picking out a box of cereal. For a few seconds the air was thick with tension, but then it eased off and Hannibal was back at his side. The man gave him a smile and then took the box of cereal Will had chosen out of the basket, tsking as he set it back on the shelf.

Neither of them mentioned what had happened and Will stayed just a touch closer to Hannibal as they finished up shopping.

It was quiet when they reached his house. Alana had taken his dogs while he was in the hospital and was bringing them back the following day, but for now without them the house seemed empty.

Hannibal seemed at home, moving towards the kitchen. He had insisted on carrying all the bags, telling Will that he should take it easy, and he could only roll his eyes at that. He was sure he was more than capable of carrying a grocery bag. Will hovered around the doorway of the kitchen, not sure what to do with himself while Hannibal put things away, frowning at the sounds of disapproval from him at the food Will had stocked.

Sensing his unease Hannibal met his eyes, “If you would like to get cleaned up, I will make something for dinner.”

Leaving Hannibal alone in his kitchen felt wrong, though he couldn’t decide why. Perhaps just having anyone in his house didn’t feel right. He would like to clean up though, the clinical smell of a hospital clung to his skin and hair. So he nodded, chewing on his lip for a moment before he turned and headed towards the bathroom.

By the time he emerged he felt much better, and he thought he could start to tell the effects that had been the encephalitis. His head felt less foggy, a little more in control, but he was disappointed that he didn’t seem to have regained any memories. Still nothing about being a beta or omega. With a sigh he pulled on the clothes he had brought into the bathroom with him, a simple tshirt and pajama pants because he couldn’t bring himself to care that he had company when the last few days had left him so drained and followed the smell of food.

He already knew Hannibal was in his element when he cooked, he just hadn’t realized the man would look as calm and in control when he was in someone else’s kitchen. It looked like there was enough food being prepared for an army, and Will realized what Hannibal had meant about making sure he had food for the weekend.

It did something to him, his chest tightening, to have someone taking care of him. He moved closer, and when Hannibal paused in what he was doing to glance at him, he couldn’t help smiling back. His alpha was cooking for him, and his chest vibrated like he was going to purr again, but it stayed just low enough that he could only feel the rumble in his chest. He felt safe, and it was unfamiliar enough to make him feel anxious, and he didn’t miss the irony of that.

“Are you trying to calm me?”

Hannibal didn’t answer for a moment, eyes on something in a pan, before he looked back to Will. “No.” He tilted his head, “Do you feel calm?”

“Yes.” He leaned against the doorframe and struggled with what he wanted to say, “You cooking for me. Part of me just ya know, likes that. Is that an omega thing?”

“In my experience Will, most people enjoy having someone cook for them.” Hannibal gave a small shrug, his attention back on the food. “When you presented as a beta you and I developed a friendship, trust, where you sought my company as a calm, as your paddle so it would follow that you’d still feel that now that you presented as an omega. Perhaps even stronger now.”

His voice was small and he wasn’t sure he wanted to know the answer, to know that he had been so oblivious, “But did I do that because we got along or because I had omega instincts I didn’t know?”

“I think that we get along, because we can see each other. It is as simple as that.” He motioned at the table, “Are you hungry Will?”

He started to shake his head but then thought about it and nodded. “A little.”

“Please set the table, we can sit down and eat. I’ve made enough for your meals through Monday.” Will must have looked like he was going to deny that and Hannibal added, “Including lunch to bring with you on Monday. Your first day back to classes may be tiring.”

Instead of arguing he nodded, embarrassed to like the idea of Hannibal packing him food, and quickly hid it by grabbing plates and setting them on the table.

It was a simple meal, at least by Hannibal’s standards, and Will was certain that was for his benefit. The silence was comfortable and by the time Will had eaten, the last few days really hit him and he could barely keep his eyes open.

He stumbled when he stood to help Hannibal clear the table, a strong arm catching him and steadying him, and he was leaning into him before he thought about it. This close he could smell alpha, and he smelled so good. Safe and calm and when a gentle hand landed on the back of his head he realized he had pressed closer until he was nuzzling against Hannibal.

And he wanted to pull away, to stutter through an apology, but couldn’t bring himself to. The last few days had just been so *much* and he was overwhelmed. And while he was used to being overwhelmed, he wasn’t used to anyone comforting him through it. He whined, a small distinctly omega sound, sighing when it made the arms holding him tighten.

“I got you Will, just relax.” He was being moved towards his living room and he just let it happen, no reserves left to fight anything at the moment. Hannibal settled him on his bed, nudging him gently until he moved up it, “I am going to clean up.”

“I can help-”

“Stay here. You’ve had a long day, Will, I will take care of it.”

He let the calm in the words settle him, and once Hannibal was back in the kitchen he moved further up the bed, not laying down but pressed his back to the headboard, pulling blankets up around him. It was more vulnerable than he was used to being with someone in his house, but the part of him that worried about those things seemed to be in a deep slumber and he couldn’t wake it up.

By the time Hannibal came back in the room Will’s eyes were fluttering closed, slumping against the headboard, and he struggled to sit up straight. Hands were on either side of his face, forcing his eyes open as Hannibal tilted his face up to look at him. He barely was able to push down the urge to nuzzle his palm, and oh, he really needed to get some sleep.

“Do you need anything before I leave, Will?”

He shook his head, using it as an excuse to nuzzle against his hand just a little, “I’m good.”

“Very well. Call me if you need anything, and I will see you Monday.”

If his head had been clear he would have asked about that, they didn’t have a session Monday, and he didn’t have anything planned as far as he could tell but he was too exhausted. Too worn out and he gave him a nod. HIs instincts told him not to go to sleep

with someone in his house, but he sunk into the blankets and didn't remember Hannibal leaving.

Waking up to an empty house was just as unsettling as coming home to it had been and he couldn't wait to have his dogs back. And honestly, he was kind of looking forward to seeing Alana as well. They were friends, she was a beta, and he hoped that he could talk to her about a few things. He rubbed a hand over his face, wondering if it would make her uncomfortable. She always seemed hesitant to approach his mental state.

He chuckled to himself at that, it was fair, he didn't exactly respond well to anyone prodding. Only Hannibal seemed to be unfazed by his bristling.

Without the dogs whining to go out he took longer than usual to get up and out of bed, burying his face in his pillow and enjoying the calm. He couldn't even bring himself to be embarrassed about the night before and how easily he had given in to Hannibal's doting.

He pawed at his phone until he could look at it, squinting at it to let Alana know that anytime was good to bring the dogs without sounding too eager. It dinged back that she would be there around lunchtime and he let himself relax back into the blankets for a few more minutes. Eventually his need for coffee drove him to the kitchen.

It had been cleaned up, not a sign of Hannibal being there the night before, at least until he opened the refrigerator. There were several containers of food, more mismatched tupperware than he knew he owned, each with a small piece of paper on the top. Labeling what they were. No, not *what* they were. *When* to eat them.

And he didn't know how to feel about it. Each container listed a day and a meal, the one on top said "Breakfast Saturday" and he slowly closed the fridge. Hannibal making him food had felt nice, still did, but an uncomfortable twist of his stomach came from the unspoken command of what he was going to eat, and when.

He started the coffee and noticed a baggie of heat suppressants next to the machine, like the man had known the first thing he would go for. With a grimace he downed one dry, out of spite even though he was alone, and then found himself drifting back towards the food, relenting as he pulled out the container to just look at it. It was a scramble like he had brought the first time in the hotel, and though he didn't normally eat breakfast his stomach gave a grumble, and he rolled his shoulders before moving to heat it up. It wasn't like he was doing it because Hannibal told him to, he was just hungry. While it heated up he glanced at the other containers, they covered him for meals through lunch on Monday, and at least he could focus all his stress on what would happen with his students instead of making, or in his case not making, food.

Even over the smell, the sinfully *good* smell, of food he could scent Hannibal in his house. The kitchen, the livingroom, his bed. Everywhere the man had touched smelled like the Alpha. He hummed under his breath and he didn't mind the scent, but felt self conscious about what Alana would think. Though Hannibal was his handler, so it wasn't weird for him to have been in his house.

After the first cup of coffee started to sink in he realized why Hannibal would see him Monday, or could guess, since his car was still at Hannibal's place. How had he forgotten all about that? He sighed and leaned his hip against the counter, and an apron hanging up caught his attention.

Theoretically he knew he owned one but it hadn't been used once, but Hannibal must have worn it while he was cooking. He moved closer to it, Hannibal's scent much stronger in something that he had worn, and unexpectedly it made a jolt of arousal go through him. The urge to lean forward, to rub against the scent was overwhelming, and only his white knuckle grip on the counter stopped him.

It didn't stop him from taking in a deep breath of the scent though, the spark of arousal settling into his stomach and lower. It made the half hard on he had woken up with twitch and fill out, and for someone that had never been that interested in sex he sure seemed to respond quick enough around Hannibal.

Thinking of him made it worse, face flushing as he remembered the few days at the man's house, blushing when the memory of the man's fingers in him made his cock even harder. He bit his lip and closed his eyes, trying to force the images out and telling his body to calm down, but his imagination had never been that kind to him. Could imagine those hands cradling his face, tugging on his curls, moving down his sides - the microwave dinged and Will jumped, dragged out of the train of thoughts.

" *Merde* ." He shook his head and yanked open the microwave harder than he needed to and grabbed the bowl, refusing to flinch back when it was too hot to grab with his hands, slamming it down on the counter.

After a few steadying breaths he fished out a fork and dumped the food onto a plate, forcing himself to ignore his hard on. It was ridiculous, and embarrassing, but at least this time he was home by himself.

And it was easy to get lost in the food, even heated up in the microwave it was better than anything he ever made. There was that rush again, of an Alpha taking care of him, that brought his attention back to between his legs. He dropped one hand to squeeze himself over his pajama pants, unprepared for the want that materialized at the thought of being taken care of. It didn't escape him that his body seemed more eager by the thought of getting some actual care than it did the idea of physical sex, and that was probably something he should talk to a therapist about. One that he didn't have those feelings *about* , preferably.

He finished eating and put the dishes in the sink, holding on to the edge of the counter for a minute while he tried to get his body under control. He could jump in the shower, a cold one, but that wasn't really what he wanted to do. No, not at all. With a huff he pushed back and glanced at the clock, Alana wouldn't be there for a few hours. In a move that he refused to think about too much he grabbed the apron and headed back to his bed.

In bed he dropped the apron on the pillows next to him, close enough that he could scent alpha, but not touching it. Letting himself stay in denial of why exactly he was so turned on. He slid his hand down his pants, trying to think of anything other than Hannibal, but that only made him focus on it and a moan slipped out of his mouth as he slid his hand over himself.

Thanks to his perfect fucking memory he could still feel the way the counter had pressed against his hips, the way it had felt bent over it while Hannibal slid his fingers in him, and he whined and pressed his legs together as he felt an ache somewhere lower than his dick. His hand slid down, past his balls, to find slick. He let out an uncertain huff, pulling his hand away and going back to stroking himself.

It wasn't something he indulged in often, between his own disinterest and that it always felt uncomfortable with his dogs staring at him, and he was leaking pre cum already. He carefully slid his thumb over the tip, using the precum to make his hand slide easier, hips hitching at how good it felt. Maybe he should indulge more often.

After a few strokes he shifted his weight, biting his lip as his other hand slid between his legs, his curiosity getting the best of him. He hadn't given much thought to the orgasm he'd had at the alpha's hands, besides an overwhelming humiliation, but now that the shock of receving proof that he was an omega had settled he thought about that it had felt *good* and he wanted to see if he could feel that again.

He slid his fingers over his entrance, feeling the slick there, and closed his eyes as he pressed lightly with one finger. A whine slid out of this throat, high pitched and small, so omega it made him ache. Because, fuck, that was what he wanted. He barely had pressed his finger in to the first knuckle when it pushed him over the edge, crying out as he came over his hand and his stomach, his whole body shaking.

He panted, making no attempt to get control of his breathing or body yet, just basking in the moment before his higher brain functions would kick in and he'd feel ashamed, guilty.

When he did finally come back it was with a huff of self conscious laughter, wondering if being on suppressants for so long was why he was so sensitive, why his body reacted so strongly. He turned his head, his cheek just barely brushing the apron to scent, and with a deep sigh he pushed himself up. He should have just enough time to get everything cleaned up and make his dogs a batch of food before Alana got there.

Chapter 13

Alana's arrival was announced by happy yips and dogs scratching on the door, and Will pulled it open with a genuine smile. He had missed his pack. Alana stayed back, giving him space to greet all his dogs, and only once they had all moved inside did she approach him. She looked hesitant, smile unsure, but Will did his best to give her a reassuring smile. This wasn't her fault, though he was certain she felt bad about the way it had happened.

"You're welcome to come in, I have fresh coffee." He could see the hesitation on her face and he forced himself to meet her eyes, just for a moment, "If you want, it would be nice to chat."

"Sure." The momentary eye contact seemed to win her over and she was moving forward. He stepped back into the house to give her room to enter, feeling awkward as he shut the door behind them. Not sure how to start the conversation.

She glanced around his house and he motioned her towards the kitchen, taking a moment to get his thoughts in order while he pulled out another mug and poured her a cup of coffee, "Thank you again for taking care of the dogs."

"Of course Will, that is what friends are for. How are you feeling?"

He shrugged, "Still trying to sort that out. My head doesn't feel so foggy, I feel a little more like myself." He scuffed his foot and added, because he was sure she was thinking it even though she probably wouldn't ask, "I still don't remember anything about being an omega or taking suppressants."

"I'm sorry." It sounded genuine and when he glanced at her face she looked sad. "Is there anything I can do?" She glanced around again, "Has Hannibal been taking care of you?"

At the words he was unable to stop the flush that moved up his face, eyes darting to the apron hanging back in the corner of the kitchen, but he knew that she wasn't asking anything like that. "He made me an army of food."

She nodded, unable to hide that she was pleased, "I'm glad that you decided to keep him as your handler, for now at least. He seems to care about your well being, which is more than can be said for…" She trailed off, a blush on her cheeks like she didn't mean to say that.

And though he hadn't intended to be hostile he couldn't help it as he muttered out towards the table, "You could have warned me, you know. We're friends, you could have came and talked to me before handing me off to two alphas."

"I know." She set down her coffee cup and stared at it, "That wasn't how I wanted things to go. It got sprung on me last minute, Jack didn't even want me to be there but I insisted. You know how he can be when his mind is set."

He scoffed, but he knew she was right. Now that he had brought it up she took it as an invitation. "How are you handling everything?

"About as well as you'd imagine someone handling losing all their autonomy and privacy." He put up one hand, "And don't give that spiel about that it isn't like that for omegas anymore, Alana, because I'm *living* it." She didn't seem to have an answer for that, and he at least appreciated that she wasn't trying to bull shit him. It pushed him to add, "Hannibal seems to be going out of his way to make sure that I don't feel pushed. We haven't worked out what is going to happen yet, but I asked him about my house and my dogs and he said it was fine to keep them." Even as he said it, it grated on him, that he was pleased to have permission to keep his own things, and either his instinctive reaction or her own reactions to the words, made her wince.

"I'm sorry Will, if there is anything you need, anything that I can help with please don't hesitate to ask."

He nodded, taking her words for face value, "I'm having trouble adjusting, honestly. I feel like I have thoughts or urges that aren't me, I don't know what to do with them."

Her hand tightened slightly on the coffee mug, but her voice was forced calm, like she didn't want to scare him off. "Violent thoughts?"

A surprised huff of air made it out when he realized what she thought he meant and he shook his head, muttering, "Yea, I wish." At her look he stood to get another cup of coffee, "No, omega thoughts, I think." He swallowed hard and rolled his eyes, "Like… being happy to be taken care of. Calmer when an Alpha…" He hesitated and his voice was more subdued, "When Hannibal takes charge." The words came out in a rush and he crossed his arm defensively. Logically he knew that Alana wouldn't mock him, but he couldn't stop the ingrained response to being vulnerable.

"Oh, Will." Her voice was thick with relief and it made him tense up.

"See? Even talking about this - that isn't me."

"It's a good thing Will, don't you think?" She put her hand to stop him before he couldn complain about that, "Being able to talk about things. It will help you adjust." She glanced at the table and back up at him, "Maybe this is why you've always had such a hard time, suppressants are hard on the mind and body, it's why they aren't prescribed."

He wouldn't admit him but a small part of himself couldn't help be disappointed at her answer, at more people sounding like him being an omega was the best for him. "That is what I keep being told."

"I'm sorry, Will. I wasn't trying to… I just want to be here for you."

The moment was gone though as Will's defenses came back up, and he gave her a nod without meeting her eyes. "Thanks."

She fiddled with her coffee cup and then sighed. "There is something else you should know Will, and I thought you should hear it from me before you went into classes Monday." Clearly she didn't want to make the same mistake again.

"What?"

"What happened with you, that you are an omega, has been a…" Her face didn't hide that she wasn't happy about what she was saying, "It's been a hot topic at the FBI. A lot of gossip. People that are curious how you hid it for so long, staff members that are angry and students who are unhappy with having an omega as a teacher for the kind of things you teach." The words came out in a rush, probably too much information but she had to get it out.

It hadn't occurred to him that anyone other than Jack and their group would notice, would care, and the thought of him being the topic of conversation like that was unsettling. Enough that he could feel the distress build in him even as he tried to push it down.

"Do I still have a job?"

"For now." She winced, she should have sugar coated that a little more. "Jack and I both have backed you, have told them that this has no effect on what you do. He has been doing his best to calm the situation."

Will was angry, embarrassed, and wasn't sure how to handle it. Didn't know what he was supposed to do, what he was supposed to say. Not ready to face other people that wanted an explanation from him, and then focused on the last part. "Students?"

She shrugged. "You know how it is, the field attracts a lot of alphas, and some of them think differently about omegas. I'm sorry, I should have eased into this more, but I thought you should be ready when you came in."

Humiliatingly enough, Will thought he might cry, but he pressed the palm of his hand to his eyes and took a few deep breaths, dropping it once he was under control. "I'll deal with it."

"We can put off classes for a bit longer if you'd like, or I could-"

"I'll deal with it Alana." It was clearly the end of the conversation and she nodded, trying to give him a smile but it faltered.

They chatted for a bit longer, the air tense and awkward, before Alana finally gave in and left. After she left he glanced around, mouth twisting as he set about cleaning. The only scent he wanted in his house was his.

The rest of the weekend was as relaxed as it could be. He played with his dogs, he ate the meals that Hannibal had left - ignoring the times he was supposed to eat them, a childish rebellion, but it made him feel better.

He expected Hannibal to call him about Monday, and when he still hadn't heard from him by Sunday night and was starting to worry about how he was going to get to work. He pulled out his phone and sighed, clicking on Hannibal's name.

"Hey. I haven't heard from you all weekend. My car is still at your place." He wasn't sure what else to say, he didn't want to ask if he was going to give him a ride, and with a start he realized he had been waiting for Hannibal to tell him what to do. Before he would have just arranged something. He quickly typed out, " *I'll grab a taxi and have them drop me off to grab it sometime tomorrow."*

He had barely hit send when his phone was ringing, Hannibal's name flashing across the screen. His heart sped up as he answered, undeniably excited to hear his voice. "Hello?"

"Will." His voice was soft, soothing, and Will's shoulders relaxed. He hadn't even realized they were so tense. "How are you feeling?"

"Better." He nudged the floor with his foot, "Thank you for the food."

"My pleasure." There was a shuffling sound, like he had caught the other man doing paperwork. "I received your message. If it works for you I can pick you up in the morning for your classes, and then after work I can bring you to retrieve it."

"I don't want to put you out."

"I think that we should have a bit of a talk anyways, now that you are feeling better. No reason to let that worry you Will, just want to make sure that we are on the same page."

"Okay, yeah." He didn't like it, didn't like the lack of control, but didn't know how else to answer. He didn't want to seem ungrateful. "Same page about what?"

The tone of Hannibal's voice dropped just a bit, like he was scolding. "About a plan going forward for you as an omega. I think you know that."

"I thought we already did that."

There was a long pause, and tension built until Will fought down a whine in his throat, pissed off that even over the phone Hannibal was able to elicit that response. He wasn't able to completely keep the sound quiet and at it Hannibal sighed. "Your worry is misplaced. I will see you tomorrow morning, Will, around 8am. Does that work?"

"Yeah, I guess." He rubbed a hand over his face and blew out a huff of air, he sounded petulant. "I mean, yes, that is great. Thanks."

Will's mood only got worse from there. He spitefully didn't eat the dinner that Hannibal had made him, choosing instead to drink several fingers of whiskey, and when he finally crawled into bed he barely slept. Tossing and turning, anxious about classes, about life in general and even his dogs couldn't calm him.

By the time Hannibal arrived to pick him up, a full half hour early, he was on his 2nd pot of coffee, bags under his eyes, and part of him wanted to tell the man to fuck off and he would figure out his own way in. When Hannibal knocked on the door he had set himself to do just that, consequences be damned, but when he reached it he could scent him and felt his resolve waver.

He yanked the door open, keeping his glare in place, flustered when Hannibal responded to it with a smile. "Good Morning, Will."

"You said 8."

"I apologize, I thought we could have breakfast together."

His body tensed as Hannibal let himself in, unable to put his finger on his panic, but realized it had something to do with Hannibal finding out that he hadn't eaten the meals he left and he tried to step in his way, "I already ate."

Hannibal made a sound, heading for the fridge and Will realized it was going to be obviously fairly certain that he was lying. Just before Hannibal opened the fridge he whined again, catching the man's attention. "I didn't eat."

He didn't look surprised, "I assumed so." He pulled open the fridge, tsking when he saw there were a few missed meals. He looked up at Will, "Didn't eat dinner last night either?"

Will almost fell into answering automatically, feeling ashamed, but as soon as he realized what he was doing he crossed his arms and scowled. "So what." At Hannibal's look his scowl deepened, "I'm an adult, I don't need to be told when to eat."

"I can tell." He pulled out the container that had been marked for breakfast. He had expected Will to resist being taken care of, and honestly the man had eaten more than he thought he would. Will was hovering around him, somewhere between anxious and pissed off, like an angry cat, but he ignored him.

That Will hadn't followed his orders did miff him, but as he waiting on the microwave he noticed the apron he had been wearing had been moved. The house had been cleaned down, removing his scent from everywhere, but the apron hadn't been cleaned. This close to it he could smell Will on it as well, too strong to have just brushed against it and reeking of Will's arousal. He eyed it for a moment before he glanced at Will.

The food had been forgotten, Will's eyes on the apron with his face bright red, and a grin slid across Hannibal's face, the disobedience forgotten. His needy little omega. It was a promising sign, that Will was influenced by him even when he wasn't there. Pleased he plated the food, nudging Will towards the table to sit. "I was not trying to tell you when to eat, Will. I was simply providing for you if you wished to eat."

"That was why you put on them when to eat, right?"

"Just a suggestion. I wasn't sure if you would still be confused as you recovered, and wished to make things as easy on you as possible."

He watched Hannibal's face, but couldn't feel anything from him other than genuine concern. Maybe he was overthinking things, finding slights where there weren't any. It made sense, and he tilted his head down. He chose his words carefully, "I don't like that, being managed like that. Please don't do it."

"Of course, Will."

As Will tucked into the food Hannibal pulled out the meal labeled for lunch and slipped it into Will's bag, making sure that he would have it. He knew what was best for him.

Will shivered on the way to the car, he knew it was getting colder out but hadn't given it much though, and startled when a scarf settled around his shoulders. Hannibal had it wrapped around him before he could complain. It was warm and smelled like Hannibal. "You looked cold, Will. You are still recovering from your infection, you need to stay warm."

"I have my own scarfs." Not this nice though, not carrying the comforting scent of his alpha, and he didn't complain again.

He didn't dawdle once Hannibal dropped him off, shouldering his bag and giving him a nod, before he faced the building. He probably should have told Hannibal about it, but he didn't want him to worry. Or intervene.

Will didn't see anyone as he headed towards his office, letting himself in and setting his bag down on the desk. So far everything was normal and he took the time to calm and center himself before he pulled off the scarf and shoved it in his bag. He was pulling his notes when he saw the tupperware of food and made an annoyed sound. The man was insufferable.

A glance at his watch and he had a bit of time before his class, might as well go and get everything set up. In the halls he passed a few people but he stayed close to the wall, eyes on the ground, which had always been the norm for him anyways. After what Alana had said he expected much more to do, and he found himself relaxing. He barely interacted with his students anyways.

He set his bag on his desk, busying himself with making sure the right slides were set up, and getting his notes together even though he knew what he was going to say without them. He had lived these cases, he intimately knew every in and out of them, and he was reassured because nothing had changed about this now that he was an omega. It might be the only thing that hadn't changed.

Students started filing in a few minutes before class was supposed to start and even though his back was to them he could pick out the chatter, more than usual, and he forced his shoulders to stay relaxed. He was ready for it.

Right on the dot at the start of class he turned and started talking, watching the stragglers stumble into seats, and he had just enough time to settle in to talking and think it would be fine when someone spoke up.

“Excuse me, Professor Graham, don’t you think that you should maybe explain this whole omega thing?”

He lifted his eyes to the voice, a boy sitting in the middle of the room, clearly an alpha and Will hesitated, not sure if he should acknowledge him or continue on with his lecture. He settled for raising an eyebrow at him and picked up where he left off.

It caused the man to stand up abruptly and Will jolted back against the desk, new instincts kicking in and telling him he had an angry alpha on his hands. He let himself lean against the desk like he wasn’t worried at all, “Sit down or get out of my classroom.”

“Or what?”

The outright hostility was unexpected and Will glanced around the room, though other students looked curious, none of them seemed angry or hostile like this one. He brought his attention back to the boy, Darren, and stood up straight, “Alright then, how about just get out of my classroom. Some people are here to learn, you are clearly not one of them.”

Darren moved, pheromones spiking at being ordered at by an omega he supposed, but he didn’t move towards the door. He moved towards the front. Will didn’t have to work to not look intimidated, because he wasn’t. Omega or not, this was a student and he was the professor, and he had control in his classroom.

Darren stopped a few feet in front of him, clearly scenting even though it was rude, and widened his stance. “We deserve to know who is teaching us.”

“Did you miss my name the first half of the semester?”

Darren’s lip curled and he moved the bit closer, but Will wasn’t impressed. Not when he dealt with alphas like Jack and Hannibal on a regular basis. Being omega, that might be new, but he had been beta and that was enough to start issues with some alphas. So he calmly met Darren’s eyes even as his instincts were screaming at him.

Finally Darren’s body language eased even as his voice lowered, “Sure, I like you Professor, so I’ll do as you asked me to, I’ll take a seat for now. But we both know all I need is the right tone to have you on your knees, don’t you think that makes it difficult for you to properly teach us?”

“Get out of my class.” He was enraged, just the thought of what Darren was threatening over rode any instinct he had to submit because this alpha wasn’t worthy of that, he was just a spoiled child. He didn't bother to lower his voice, “And since you are here to work in law enforcement, I’m sure you know that what you are threatening to do can be considered assault. I’m sure you wouldn’t be stupid enough to do that.” He eyed him up and down, “Though based on your grades maybe you are. Now, out of my class.”

Though he gave every outward sign of not being flustered he knew that was practically seeping distress hormones, but there wasn’t anything he could do about that. It finally seemed to occur to Darren how out of line he was, a blush rising on his cheeks as he retreated, grabbing his books and heading out of the room.

He let out the breath he didn't realize he was holding, not sure what he would have done if it escalated. Alana had warned him that there was unrest but he hadn't really expected anyone to do anything besides muttering behind his back.

The class itself was on edge, the betas in the room probably couldn't scent his distress but the alphas could, and a few looked concerned. Unable to help their instinctive response to it. He licked his lips, "Alright. Anyone else have anything to say or can I get back to teaching?"

There were still too many worried faces though, and he was certain that at least one of them was going to try to calm him, and he would lose it. He leaned back on the desk and his nose caught a familiar scent, looking down at his bag where the scarf was peeking out. Trying to not be too obvious he dropped one hand to wrap in it and tug it out, Hannibal's scent helping to calm him, and after a few moments the scent of distress had faded and the tension in the room had eased.

One student in the front row, Mike, timidly spoke up. He was an alpha too, and Will prepared himself for another fight, but he only sounded deferential. "Sorry, Professor." He didn't say what he was apologizing for exactly but it broke the final tension and Will gave him a quick nod, and picked up where he had left off.

God he hoped every class wouldn't go like this.

Chapter 14

It got around quickly how his first class had gone, how he had handled Darren and though there were some uncomfortable moments in his classes, some push back from Alphas everyone stayed mostly in line.

It was stressful though, his hackles stayed up and he kept his eyes mostly on the ground or his notes, distressed enough that he couldn't even manage the small amount of eye contact that he usually did. He could feel some hostility, and was sure that there were at least a few students that wanted to make it an issue, but they weren't willing to tank their career. At least he hoped that threat over their heads continued to work. He was sure he could handle himself and any conflict that came up, but he didn't want it to come to that.

By lunch he had the scarf around his shoulders. He had kept it close all day, letting Hannibal's scent calm him, until just touching it hadn't been enough. No one mentioned him wearing the scarf, and that surprised him, usually students were all over things like that. He had accepted he'd get mocked, but it was better than the anxiety.

He shouldered his bag and headed out of the room before the students had even left, heading towards his office. He was hungry, and looking forward to getting a break from interacting as much as food.

His heart sank when he came around the corner and Darren was leaning against his office door. He hesitated, in his classroom he hadn't been intimidated but was ashamed that alone here, his fight or flight was kicking in. Heavy on the flight. For a moment he thought maybe Darren wanted to apologize, and though he was still uncomfortable he would deal with that for the sake of professionalism, but his body language was tense and he didn't look like he was sorry for anything.

Already taking a step backwards he stuttered to a stop when Darren looked up and noticed him. Darren stood up straighter, moving away from the door, eyes firmly on Will. He tried to hide his nerves and moved forward, refusing to retreat now that he had been noticed.

He met his eyes briefly before looking away, unable to keep up the eye contact. He shifted his bag on his shoulder as he glanced around, hoping someone else would be heading down the hallway. There wasn't and subconsciously he tugged on the scarf, pulling it closer around him.

"What do you want?" It wasn't the most friendly, but he was sure everyone was used to his temperament.

He caught a glimpse of Darren opening his mouth to talk, but his mouth snapped shut and he could see him scenting. There was a long pause and he forced himself to look up. The arrogance had slid off Darren's face, replaced by caution, and Will wasn't sure what was going on.

“I wanted to…” Darren trailed off once Will was closer, and his eyes darted down to the scarf and he took a step back. Darren’s lip curled and a low grumble made it out, but he cut it off almost as soon as it started.

Will tilted his head, and all at once he realized what happened. Darren could smell Hannibal, and the smell of the alpha on him was tempering his behavior. Will couldn’t decide if he wanted to be indignant or relieved. “Why are you at my office?”

Darren’s eyes were still lingering on the scarf, but grudgingly slid up to look at Will. His words were stilted, “I wanted to talk about what happened in class.”

He moved to his door, watching Darren give ground, and it helped his confidence. “Okay.” Darren’s fists clenched, he was probably expecting Will to simper, or be apologetic and he clearly didn’t like Will’s response.

Silence stretched between them, and despite his initial caution Darren shifted into a more aggressive stance, clearly deciding the alpha scent wasn’t a threat. And Will hated that he was the first one to break. He looked away, grabbing on the door handle, and muttered. “Your behavior was unacceptable, if you… if it doesn’t happen again you can come back to class.”

There was a snort from Darren and Will grit his teeth. “Fine. I can smell how distressed you are, I usually try not to upset omegas.” It was dripping with contempt and Will knew it was only going to get worse. “It was really disappointing to find out what you are, Graham. I liked you. See you in class.”

Darren brushed past him, touching just enough to make him stumble, and he let out a long sigh as he watched him leave. He shoved open his door, slamming it shut once he was inside with more force than needed. There was pressure behind his eyes and he held his palms against them, he would not cry over this. It didn’t matter that he was embarrassed, that he felt helpless, he would get through it. This wouldn’t change him or his life. He wouldn’t let it.

Suddenly his phone went off, vibrating in his pocket, and he slammed into the door as he startled. Aggravated, he grabbed the phone, yanking it out, and barely managed to keep from throwing it across the room. Only seeing Hannibal’s name on it stopped him, though he wasn’t any less aggravated. He took a moment to calm before answering, not wanting to get into it with the other man. He couldn’t put his finger on exactly why but he didn't want Hannibal to know that things weren’t going great.

“Hello.”

“ *Will, hello. How is your day so far?”*

He winced, and knew that his tone was snarky, “Are you calling to make sure I eat lunch? I told you I don’t want to be managed.” The words were barely out of his mouth when panic slid down his spine, it wasn’t the way he should be talking to his alpha. He added before Hannibal could say anything, “Sorry, it’s been a lot this morning.”

“ *Of course, that is to be expected. Is there anything I can do to help?”*

“I don’t know.” It wasn’t what he meant to say.

“ *Why don’t you take a few breaths. Do you want to tell me what happened?”*

“No.” He did take a few breaths though, and when he felt calmer he sighed. “I didn’t realize that so many people would care.”

“ *Would you like a longer break from teaching? I’m sure Jack would understand.* ”

“No.” He shook his head even though Hannibal couldn’t see it, “No, I just want things to get back to normal.” He moved to his desk, pulling the food out of his bag as he dropped into his chair and realized something. “I derailed the call. What were you calling about?”

There was a quiet chuckle, “I wanted to make sure you found the food I packed for your lunch.”

It was impossible not to laugh in response, because of course that was why he was calling. “I found it. Thank you.”

Hannibal confirmed when he would pick him up after work and they said their goodbyes, and by the time Will hung up the phone he felt better. It was getting hard to ignore that Hannibal’s presence calmed him. No, more than that. That he genuinely enjoyed being around him. And maybe in more than a platonic way. His face flushed at the thought and he pulled the food closer, trying not to think too much as he ate.

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